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Wm. O. Johnston  
February 1892

# KELSO TRACTS.

✓  
Horatius Bonar



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"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."  
—ROM. v. 20.

"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the  
promise by faith of Christ Jesus might be given to them  
that believe."—GAL. iii. 22.

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*W. M. English*  
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## P R E F A C E.

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THESE Tracts were originally designed solely for the benefit of the Author's congregation, and for his own use, in general distribution. He had no idea of the extent which their circulation was to reach. He sought merely to teach his own people by them, nor had he any ambitious aim of writing for a wider circle. He thought of them only as helps to his own pastoral work, and commenced them as such. He meant them but as words of instruction to his flock, words which should speak when his voice was silent, words which should tell the infinite tale of grace in the quiet dwellings of his people, perpetuating, not superseding, the public ministry of the Word, carrying on at home the work of the pulpit, or the prayer-meeting, or the class, both in the closet and in the family. God has been pleased to own them in many ways, and to give them a much wider circle to traverse than was reckoned on, or aimed at. To Him be the glory and the blessing, throughout eternity!

They are rather miscellaneous in their contents, and immethodical in respect of order and connection. This arose from the way in which they commenced, as just stated. No outline was sketched, no special plan adopted, because no intention was entertained, at the time, of extending the series to above five or six numbers, instead of the thirty-seven which it now embraces. Having once begun without a plan, it became a matter of difficulty, or rather of impossi-

bility, to strike out, or follow one afterwards. Besides, the desultory method had some advantages of its own, inasmuch as it left the author more unfettered in reference to *subjects*. He could more readily take advantage of passing circumstances, and direct attention to peculiar topics of importance, without being obliged to smoothe them down into a consecutiveness which did not belong to them. Had he been writing a treatise, nothing would have been more preposterous; but, as he was merely throwing out casual fragments of instruction, there was nothing unsuitable or awkward about the plan. It suited himself best; and upon the whole, he believes it was most suitable for his people. It may be well for the reader of this volume to keep this in mind, lest he should commence its perusal under the idea that he is to find in it a regular and consecutive series of treatises and expositions.

But, though these Tracts are not at all arranged in connection, or after a system, yet they do in some measure hang, the one upon the other, being knit together by oneness of sentiment and thought, if not by regular coherence of plan. There may be among a hundred fragments, the unity of a pervading thought, which is to be found in each of them, though not one of the pieces may properly fit in to, or link on closely with the other. So we think it will be seen. There is a leading idea throughout, as any careful reader will soon discover, and by observing it, he may not only derive more profit from the Tracts, but be saved, perhaps, from mis-apprehending and mis-judging the Author.

The leading object of the whole Series may be said to be, to endeavour to bring out with some fulness, perhaps with some repetition, the Work of Christ, and the Work of the Holy Spirit, *in reference to the wants of sinners*. There are

not a few other points touched, more or less largely, but, this may be said to be the prominent and ever-recurring theme, set forth under many various aspects, and embodied in innumerable passages of the Word of God.

It was found, in conversation with the troubled and doubting, that much confusion prevailed in their minds, as to both of these points, the Work of Christ, and the Work of the Spirit. There seemed a continual tendency to intermingle these two things, and so to subvert both ; to build for eternity, partly on the one, and partly on the other, and so to come short of any true and sure establishment of the soul in grace. Many seemed most perversely bent on taking these two works as if they were one compounded work, trying to build their peace, their forgiveness, their salvation, upon a mysterious mixture of the two. The external and the internal were not kept distinct ; the objective and the subjective were confusedly tangled together, so that neither was understood aright, and both were misapplied. It was not CHRIST FOR US, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US, but it was *Christ and the Holy Spirit together, both for us and in us*. Thus, all was vagueness and indistinctness in reference to what Christ had done, and in reference to what the Holy Spirit had been sent down to do. Hence, all was darkness in the soul. There was no peace, for the ground of peace was not rightly seen ; there was no holiness, for the source of holiness was but imperfectly apprehended. This Popish mixture of these two things—"Christ *for* us, and the Spirit *in* us," required to be exposed to view, its unscripturalness condemned, and its evil influence neutralized.

It is CHRIST FOR US, that is our peace. It is THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US, that is our regeneration and holiness. Woe be to the soul that intermingles these two, and seeks to rest



his peace and hope, partly on what Christ has done for him, and partly on what the Spirit is doing in him.\*

In consequence of this attempt to separate what had been so sadly confused and mixed together in the minds of many with whom he conversed, the Author's meaning has been exposed to much mis-construction, and a sense put upon one of his Tracts against which he most strongly protests,—a sense, which he cannot help calling a most unfair one,—a sense, which, when he wrote the Tract, he never so much as dreamt of,—a sense, which is not only contradicted in the body of the Tract itself, but, most explicitly and repeatedly set aside in the other numbers of the Series. It was written before certain new doctrines arose, with which it has been supposed to coincide, when larger liberty of speech was allowable, because not liable to misinterpretation. Subsequent controversies may have led some to put a less favourable construction upon it. But, is this just or charitable? What work almost is there, written anterior to an age of controversy, that will stand the rigid test of a terminology, framed to meet the exigencies of subsequent discussion, and

\* “Some are all their days laying the foundation, and are never able to build upon it, to any comfort to themselves or usefulness to others. And the reason is, because they will be mixing with the foundation stones that are only fit for the building. They will be bringing their obedience, duties—mortification of sin and the like, unto the foundation. These are precious stones to build with, but unmeet to be first laid to bear upon them the whole weight of the building. The foundation is to be laid in mere grace, mercy, pardon, in the blood of Jesus Christ: this the soul is to accept of and rest in merely as it is grace, without the consideration of anything in itself, but that it is sinful and obnoxious to ruin. This it finds a difficulty in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix in it; it cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones, without some cement of its own endeavours and duty, and because these things will not mix, they spend fruitless efforts about it all their days.”—OWEN *on the 130th Psalm*.



to oppose errors, which were not till then in existence? Besides, is it right to tear off a single leaf from a man's book,—a book of more than three hundred pages,—and to hold it up to view as a full statement of all that he believes on a particular point, regardless of the most distinct explanations in a hundred other parts,—more especially, when one of his chief designs was to *isolate* each topic as much as possible, not in order to disjoin them in reality, but merely for the sake of clearness and explicitness, to present them separately to the reader?

It is only, then, by setting distinctly forth the Work of Christ for us, and the Work of the Spirit in us, that we can really present the sinner with what he needs. As absolutely helpless and unholy, he needs an Almighty Spirit to new-create him. As condemned and accursed, he needs a Divine substitute and peace-maker. And in making known the latter, we preach the Gospel. For the Gospel is the good news of what another has done for us. It is not sent to tell *me* what *to do*, but to tell me what God has done. If it only made known what I had to do or to feel, it would be no Gospel to me, for there would still remain a vast gulf between it and me; but it comes to make known to me what God *has done*,—has done so completely, that he has left nothing for me to do, but merely to take possession of a purchased gift.

And in setting forth the work of the Spirit, we are called upon to be careful on the one hand, to shew the necessity for the direct and special operation of His power, and on the other, to guard the sinner against resting upon the Spirit's work, as if it were part of the foundation on which he builds for heaven. The work in us, however deep and decisive, can never pacify our consciences or

reconcile us to God. It can never make, or maintain, our peace. It cannot be our resting-place, or our Saviour. Convictions, feelings, prayers, repentance, duties, can never be our peace. No fruits of the Spirit, however precious, can ever make us acceptable before God. Nor, as too many seem to suppose, is it *our faith*, that is our peace or our salvation. Neither as an act of our own, nor as a fruit of the Spirit, can our faith be our Saviour. It is said to save us, simply because it is a giving ourselves up to Christ to be saved by him. It excludes not only works, but its own self, in the matter of salvation. It is what we believe, not our act of believing, that saves us. On this point, an old writer thus speaks :—" Faith, as we have often heard, rests upon Christ alone. It in effect excludes itself as a work, in the matter of justification. It is not a thing upon which a sinner rests : it is his resting on the Surety. Therefore, that man who would bring in his faith, as part of his justifying righteousness before God, thereby proves that he has no faith in Jesus Christ. He comes as with a lie in his right hand; for such is the absurdity, that he trusts in the act of his faith, and not in its object, *i. e.*, he believes in his faith, not in Jesus Christ. Having taken Christ, as he pretends, he would have that very act whereby he received him, sustained at the divine tribunal, as his righteousness. Thus Christ is bid to stand at a distance, and the sinner's own act is by himself bid to come near, in the case of justification. This is nothing else but works under another name. It is not faith; for that necessarily establishes grace. This being a matter of the utmost importance, we cannot be too plain or precise upon it. The proud deceitful heart of man has a diabolical dexterity, so to speak, in destroying the doctrine of grace, and therewith

himself. The sinner will seek a thousand lurking holes at the foot of Sinai, burning as it is, rather than repair to Mount Zion. Men may dispute with others, and deceive themselves as they will, but as Christ's surety-righteousness only would be sustained as satisfactory to law and justice, so nothing but it can support a sinner at a dying hour. Everything else will then be swept away as a refuge of lies, and the sinner, not in Christ, exposed to one eternal storm."\*

It is of the utmost moment that these things be attended to, otherwise we shall never present the Gospel in any really tangible shape. Nay, we shall so confound things that differ, that they to whom it is preached shall not be able to see in it any glad tidings at all. With much that is evangelical, both in phrase and sentiment, in our statements, we may yet miss the real point and burden of the Gospel, and so leave men nearly as much in the dark as if we had set them upon providing a righteousness for themselves. And as, in these last days, there are so many refuges of lies, within which sinners have entrenched themselves, it becomes all the more necessary to let men see what the real refuge is, and how secure a hiding-place from the storm it affords to any sinner that will only avail himself of its divinely-erected shelter.

For thus only it is that any thing like true *religion* can exist. A man may be anxious, solemn, earnest, and yet have nothing of what God can recognize as religion. So long as he is mistaking the way of acceptance, he cannot have what God calls religion. For he has not yet got upon the foundation, he does not as yet know the way of approaching God, the only way in which God will receive him. Therefore his worship cannot be acceptable, for he

\* Bell on the Covenants.

himself is not yet accepted. And how can there be true religion, where the worshipper and the worship are alike unacceptable? The idea which many have of religion is, that it is a most necessary and becoming thing, by means of which they hope, in course of time, to work themselves into God's favour, and so to obtain forgiveness before they die. But this is *man's* religion, not God's. It has no resemblance to that in which God delights, and which alone he will accept. Its chief feature is a direct contradiction to that which the Bible presents to us. It is an entire inversion of God's order. It *ends* with securing forgiveness, whereas God's religion *begins* with securing it. Man's religion is just a series of solemn efforts to recommend himself to the favour of God, in which efforts the only recommendation which God will acknowledge, that is, the Work of His own Son, is lost sight of. God's religion, on the other hand, is the holy self-sacrificing life of one who having secured forgiveness and favour at the very outset, simply, in believing the record which God has given of his Son, is walking with Him in the calm consciousness of being entirely accepted, and working for Him all the day long, with the delighted eagerness of one whose only reward for toil is the smile of love; who having been much forgiven, loveth much, and is seeking to shew forth by a life-time's untiring service, how much he feels himself a debtor to the grace of a redeeming God.

KELSO, October, 1846.

*11/10/46 13/10/46*

## THE DOOR OF SALVATION OPENED.

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*The everlasting Door of Mercy and Salvation opened; or a loud and shrill voice from heaven to unregenerate sinners on earth. Plainly showing the necessity of opening your hearts that the King of Glory may enter in; for He is coming in flaming fire to take vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*Behold I stand at the door and knock!—REV. iii. 20.*

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It has pleased the most wise Disposer of all things, out of the riches of his free grace, to offer Jesus Christ to poor, lost, and undone sinners; and also it has pleased the Lord Jesus, not only to die for sinners, that He might open up a way for them to return to God, but to stand knocking at the door of their hearts to intreat them to be reconciled to God. Therefore, as you love your souls, as you love your bodies, as you would not bring damnation on yourselves, hear and fear, and do no more wickedly, but open your hard and stony hearts that the King of Glory may come in! O sinner! Christ is now standing and calling to thy soul, "If thou wilt hear and open, I will come in unto you!" Now Christ is saying, "I know thy works;" I know well enough that thou hast been a blasphemer, or a drunkard, or unclean, or a thief, or a swearer, or a Sabbath-breaker, or a scorner, yet I stand at thy door this day and knock! I will receive thee to mercy, I will forgive all thy sins, I will accept, I will heal, I will save thy soul, if thou wilt open thy heart this day unto me and let me in! O brethren, for Christ's sake, refuse not Christ, neglect not so great a salvation, lest ye perish!

1. Consider your need of Christ. "Give me Christ, or I perish for ever." Can you be saved without Christ? O! if you may have Christ but for opening the door, then, while it is called to-day, hear and open to him. 2. Consider what answer thou wilt be able to make at the great day, if thou wilt harden thy heart and not open. What wilt thou, what canst thou, plead for thyself at the day of judgment? Wilt thou say that the gospel never offered thee Christ? Why, thou hast heard it this day, "If any man will hear and open I will



come in to him and will sup with him." Wilt thou say, I would have opened my heart had it not been for the love of sin, or friends, or companions? O how will men and angels hiss at thee! This is the man who for his lusts forsook his mercies, who, for a little vanity neglected his own salvation. O how wilt thou curse thyself, to think that for nothing, yea, for what is worse than nothing, thou hast put off Christ and his salvation! Therefore, men, brethren, and fathers, hearken unto me, I this day propose to you blessing and cursing, life and death!—salvation if you open unto Christ, damnation if you refuse Christ.

For the Lord's sake, choose not cursing but blessing; choose not death but life; choose not hell but heaven; choose not sin but Christ. Though you have formerly slighted him, yet if you will now regard him, if yet you will yield, if yet you will consent, if yet you will become willing to open unto Christ—Christ will be yours, mercy will be yours, salvation will be yours! And what would you have more? Will not all this do? Will not love constrain you? In love and mercy, let me beg of thee to ask thy soul this question, how long will this life and its comforts last? Is the world's happiness everlasting? No, surely. Thy money and thy corn and thy land will do thee no good in the great day. O what hast thou laid up for the world to come! Is the door of thy heart open to Christ? Alas, alas, is thy poor soul unconverted all this while!—what will become of thee when this life and all its comforts are gone? O hard-hearted sinner! this broad way in which thou walkest will never bring thee to the promised land. Thy gold and silver key will never open heaven's gate for thee. Thy care about this world's good will not plead for thee before the Judge. All thy friends and acquaintance with whom thou hast spent many joyful hours—their good words will stand thee in no stead. Then thou wilt be ready to cry, O where is the Christ that I have despised! O where is the Jesus that I have resisted! Will he plead for me! No surely. Go to the gods whom thou hast chosen. O what will become of me—of my lost soul! Must I not die; and whither will death carry me? Into the land of light or of darkness? To which of them am I travelling? Surely the way of pleasure, the broad way of the world, is not the way to heaven and everlasting happiness. Say then, O sinner, to thy soul, thy poor lost dying soul, what! must I be taken from all my glory and greatness, from all my delights and pleasures, and be thrown, like Lucifer, son of the morning, from all my

brightness, into blackness and darkness for ever! When death hath closed my eyes, must I awake in everlasting flames! Yes, sinner, thou shalt; and that without remedy, unless thou open thy heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ask thy soul on which hand thou art likely to stand in the day of judgment; on the right among the sheep, or on the left among the goats. What will be the end of those joys which now make so glad thy heart? Thou art now in the broad way to destruction and utter reparation from God's presence for ever! Thy pleasures here we may judge of; but O who can tell the thousandth part of those fiery torments to which thou art liable in the other world! When thou diest thou shalt be a damned creature; while thou livest thou art fed like a beast by common Providence; thou art an utter stranger to feeding promises. If thou lookest upwards, God is frowning, and his wrath is revealed from heaven against thee. The heavens and their host are ready every moment to discharge God's curses like thunderbolts against thee. If thou lookest downward, thou mayest see hell opening its mouth to swallow thee up quick; many dangers attending thee every day, many miseries every moment. Legions of devils stand watching thee, and waiting only for the leave of God to drag thy soul into the lake of fire. As long as thou refusest to hear Christ's voice, thou hast a hell upon earth. It is not the multitude of thy companions that shall lessen thy torments; but they shall rather increase them. Thy life that hath been full of worldly joy shall end in deadly woe!

All you into whose hands this little book shall come, O let me beg you to consider how your hearts can endure to think of being shut out of heaven, out of blessedness for ever! Ask your heart these questions. Can I burn? Can I endure the vengeance of eternal fire? Will a glowing oven, a scorching furnace, be an easy lodging for me? O why, my soul, wilt thou not be persuaded to repent! Is there too much pain in that! Talk to thee of crucifying the flesh, or parting with thy worldly companions, of entering in at the strait gate; O these are hard sayings, who can bear them! But how wilt thou dwell with devouring fire! How wilt thou dwell with everlasting burnings! Think on hell, O poor soul, and then think on Christ; and consider if a Redeemer from such misery be not worth the accepting of. Think on hell, and then think on sin, and carnal pleasures; consider how thou wilt relish them in the everlasting fire! Are these the price for which thou sellest

thy soul to hell! O bid these lusts and pleasures be gone! bid your companion-sins be gone; and though you loved them well, and have spent your time sinfully with them, yet tell them you must not burn for them: that you will not damn your soul to please your flesh. Having thus briefly laid down the use of terror, to awaken some poor souls out of the depth of carnal security, I shall proceed to encourage poor sinners to lay fast hold on Christ before it be too late.

O poor soul! Hast thou kept Christ out a long time, and art thou not yet resolved to open thy heart to him? What shall I say to thee? Let me say this—Christ waits still for thee; Christ is still willing to receive thee! Why, then, wilt thou undo thyself by neglecting so great a salvation? Think what message He sends to thee, what errand he comes on; it is no dismal message, it is no dreadful errand. If Christ had come to destroy thy soul, could he have had less welcome than thou hast given him? O for thy soul's sake receive Him! O ye fools, when will ye be wise! Come unto Jesus and he will have mercy on you, and heal all your backslidings, and love you freely.

But some poor soul will say, I have a desire to come to Christ, but I am afraid Christ will never receive such a wretched sinner as I am, who have stood out so long against him. In answer to this, let me give you some directions.

1. Ah poor soul, art thou willing to come to Christ? Then will Christ in no wise cast thee out, if thou comest to Him poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. O sinner come not to him in thine own strength! but come thou and say, O Lord here is a poor soul not worth any thing! O Lord make me rich in faith! here is a miserable soul, O Lord have mercy on me! here is a poor blind soul, O Lord enlighten me from above! here is a poor naked wretch, O Lord save me, lest I perish, for I cannot help myself.

2. Come to Christ by believing in him. Yes, when thy poor soul is sinking into hell, and sees no way to escape the fearful wrath of God, O then at such a time seize fast hold on Christ! O apprehend and apply all his benefits to thy soul! Come and grasp him in the arms of thy faith, and say, I believe in thee, Lord; help my unbelief. And the answer which thy Lord will give thee, will be this—be it unto thee according as thou wilt. Let Christ be in your hand, and the promise in your eye, and no doubt, though thou hast been a rebel and a traitor, yet Jesus Christ, having received gifts for the rebellious, will shew mercy to thee, and receive thee.



3. Come to Jesus Christ by repenting and forsaking all thy sins. Thou canst never come to the wedding without the wedding garment; the old man must be done away before all things can be made new. "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" Jer. iv. 14

[*The above is from an old and scarce Sermon of the Rev Samuel Rutherford.*]

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## TO ALL CARNAL, UNCONVERTED, CHRISTLESS SINNERS!

### MISERABLE SOULS!

WITH the eye of a sure, though too feeble faith, we see the heaven which you neglect, and the blessed souls in glory with Christ, whose companions you might be for ever! We see the multitude of souls in hell who came thither by the same way that you are going in, who are shut out of the glorious presence of God, and are now among the devils that deceived them! With our bodily eyes we see abundance of poor sinners living about us as if there were no God, no Christ, no heaven, no hell, no death, no judgment, no eternity! O what a deceiver is the devil, that can thus lead on souls to their own damnation! O what a cheater is this transitory world, that can make men so forget the world where they must live for ever! O what an enemy is this flesh, that thus draweth men's souls from God! O what a besotting thing is sin, that turneth a reasonable soul into worse than a beast! O what a world is this, where men are labouring to undo themselves, and gratifying the devil against that God and Saviour who would give them everlasting blessed life! Poor sinners! will you still be cheated by this deceiving world? Were you made for no better, no higher work than this? What! not one awakened look into the world where you must be for ever? Not one heart-raising thought of everlasting glory? Not one heart-piercing thought of all your Saviour's love? Not one tear for all your sinful lives? O God forbid! Let not our labours be so despised! Let not your God, your Saviour, and your souls be set so light by.

Alas! what heart can now possibly conceive, or what tongue express the pains of those souls that are under the

wrath of God! Then, sinners, you will be crying to Jesus Christ, "O mercy! O pity, pity, on a poor soul! Why, I do now, in the name of the Lord Jesus, cry to thee, "O have mercy, have pity, man, upon thy own soul!" Shall God pity thee, who wilt not be entreated to pity thyself? If thy horse see but a pit before him, thou canst scarcely force him in; and wilt thou so obstinately cast thyself into hell, when the danger is foretold thee? "Who can stand before the indignation of the Lord? and who can abide the fierceness of his anger?" (Nahum i. 6.) Methinks thou shouldst need no more words, but presently cast away thy soul-damning sins, and wholly deliver up thyself to Christ. May the Lord persuade thy heart to strike this covenant without any longer delay! But if thou be hardened unto death, and there be no remedy, yet say not another day but that thou wast faithfully warned, and hadst a friend, that would fain have prevented thy damnation.

Poor souls, consider,—God is in earnest with you; and why should not you be so with him? In his commands, his threatenings, his promises, he means as he speaks. In his judgments he is serious. Was he not so when he drowned the world? When he consumed Sodom and Gomorrah? And when he scattered the Jews? Is it time, then, to trifle with God?—Jesus Christ was serious in purchasing our redemption. In teaching, he neglected his meat and drink. In prayer, he continued all night. In doing good, his friends thought him beside himself. In suffering, he fasted forty days, was tempted, betrayed, spit upon, buffeted, crowned with thorns, sweat drops of blood, was crucified, pierced, died: there was no jesting in all this. And should not we be serious in seeking our own salvation?—The Holy Spirit is serious in soliciting us to be happy. His motions are frequent, pressing, and importunate. He striveth with us. He is grieved when we resist him. And should not we be serious, then, in obeying and yielding to his motions?—God is serious in hearing our prayers, and bestowing his mercies. He is afflicted with us. He regardeth every groan and sigh, and puts every tear into his bottle. The next time thou art in trouble, thou wilt beg for a serious regard to thy prayers. And shall we expect real mercies, when we are slight and superficial in the work of God?—the ministers of Christ are serious in exhorting and instructing you. They beg of God, and of you; and long more for the salvation of your souls than for any worldly good. If they kill them-

No. 1.—*To all Carnal, Unconverted, Christless Sinners.* 7

selves with their labour, or suffer martyrdom for preaching the gospel, they think their lives are well bestowed, so that they prevail for the saving your souls. And shall other men be so painful and careful for your salvation, and you be so careless and negligent of your own?—How diligent and serious are all the creatures in serving you! What haste makes the sun to compass the world! The fountains are always flowing for thy use; the rivers still running; spring and harvest keep their times. How hard does thy ox labour for thee from day to day! How speedily does thy horse travel with thee! And shalt thou only be negligent? Shall all these be so serious in serving thee, and thou so careless in thy service to God?—The servants of the world and the devil are serious and diligent. They work as if they could never do enough. They make haste, as if afraid of coming to hell too late. They bear down ministers, sermons, and all before them. And shall they be more diligent for damnation than thou for salvation? Hast thou not a better Master, sweeter employment, greater encouragements, and a better reward?—Time was when thou wast serious thyself in serving Satan and the flesh, if it be not so yet. How eagerly didst thou follow thy sports, thy evil company, and sinful delights! And wilt thou not now be as earnest and violent for God?—You are to this day in earnest about the things of this life. If you are sick or in pain, what serious complaints do you utter! If you are poor, how hard do you labour for a livelihood! And is not the business of your salvation of far greater moment?—There is no jesting in heaven or hell. The saints have a real happiness, and the damned a real misery. There are no remiss or sleepy praises in heaven, nor such lamentations in hell. All there are in earnest. When thou, reader, shalt come to death and judgment, oh! what deep, heart-piercing thoughts wilt thou have of eternity! Methinks I foresee thee already astonished, to think how thou couldst possibly make so light of these things. Methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy stupidity and madness.

Poor sinners! We are in good earnest with you! Can any man be in jest with you who believeth God? Our object is the saving of your poor souls. What else do we study for, labour for, suffer for, live for? Come, then, and help us, who are seeking to help you! Give over striving against God and conscience. Give over fighting against Christ and his Spirit. Take part no more with the world and the flesh, which, in your baptism, you renounced. We

offer you nothing but what we have chosen for ourselves. O increase not your guilt, your pain, by refusing these calls. O turn not our complaints to God against you. Turn us not from beseeching you to be reconciled to God, to tell him that you would not be reconciled. Force us not to say that we invited you to the heavenly feast, but you would not come. Poor sinners! your case is not yet desperate. O make it not desperate! Heaven may yet be yours if you will. O will you not be saved? Will you prefer the world and the flesh before your Saviour and your God, before a sure and everlasting joy? O retire for a little into thyself, and use the reason of a man. Look before thee whither thou art going, and look behind thee how thou hast lived; look within thee and see what state thy soul is in, whether it be ready to enter on eternity; look above thee, what a heaven of glory thou dost neglect, and what a God thou hast to be thine everlasting friend or enemy; look beneath thee, and think where they are that have died unconverted. When thou hast soberly thought of these things, then do as God and thy conscience shall direct thee. And is this an unreasonable request.

If now, poor soul, thou art fully convinced, and askest, what should I do to be saved? the Lord make thee willing, and I will quickly tell thee in a few words.

1. Come to Christ, and take him for thy Saviour, thy teacher, thy king, and he will pardon and save thee. —John i. 12. 1 John v. 11. 12.
2. Believe God's love, and the pardon of sin and the everlasting joys of heaven, that thou mayest feel all else to be vanity in comparison with these.

Pity, O Lord, and persuade these souls! Let not Christ's blood, his doctrine, his example, his Spirit, be lost unto them, and they lost for ever! Let not heaven be as no heaven to them, while they dream and dote on the shadows of this world. O save this land from the greater destruction, than all plagues, and famines, and divisions, and wars, which our sins and thy threatenings make us fear. O Lord in thee have we trusted, let us never be confounded!

[Abridged from Baxter.]

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[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

ANDREW JACK, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.



## THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

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*"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish."*—JOHN iii. 16.

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HERE God, who is infinite and unspeakable, gives after such a manner as passes all things. For that which he gives, he gives not as the wages of desert, but of mere love. This ought to encourage our hearts, and to abolish all sorrow, when this exceeding love of God comes in mind, that we might trust thereto and believe stedfastly, that God is that bountiful and great Giver, and that this gift of his proceeds of that great virtue of love. This sort of giving, which has its spring of love, makes this gift more excellent and precious. And the words of Christ are plain, that God loveth us. Wherefore, for this love's sake we ought greatly to esteem all things that he gives us. And as God, the giver, is exceedingly great, so is the gift that he giveth, which is his only Son.

But here unbelief troubles us, and also incredible darkness and ignorance, so that when we hear of this so great a gift we do not believe it. When it is told us that God hath given unto us his Son out of mere love, we are without any desire to receive it. We care not for the promise of this gift, but bestow all our cares on worldly things. Yet nothing is asked, save that thou shouldst joyfully embrace it! But alas! what an unworthy thing is this, that there be neither hearts nor hands to receive this gift! And yet God asks nothing else of us, but just to take it as our own. But this is our madness, that though we are mere beggars, we scorn to be provided for. Judge then what a grievous sin is unbelief!

Hence, also, it appears how mad the world is, that it has no joy in the gift of God. For so little does the world deserve this love and gift of God, that nothing can be more against God or nearer to the devil than the world is. And yet this is the true testimony of Christ, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. But because of these sins, and this misery with which we sinners are burdened, and so burdened that we could never escape without the help of God, God doth put forth this love, and bestows

this gift freely upon us. Is not the merciful Lord, therefore, worthy to be loved again? And ought we not to put our whole confidence in Him? Let us, then, understand that God is not here said to be angry with the world, but to love it, in that he gave his Son for it. God is merciful to us and loveth us, and of very love gave his Son unto us, that we should not perish, but have everlasting life. And as God giveth by love and mercy, so do we take and receive by faith, and no otherwise. Faith only—that is, trust in the grace and mercy of God, is the very hand by which we take this gift.

This gift is given to make us safe from death and sin. For even as a great flame is in comparison with a drop of water, so is Christ in comparison with the sins of the world. As soon as they touch Christ, and as soon as the gift is received by faith, our sins are quite consumed and abolished, even as a dry stalk is by a hot fire. These, then, are excellent words, and words of life: God grant us his grace to print them in our hearts. For he that hath these words surely fixed in his heart can neither be afraid of the devil, nor of sin, nor of hell, but will be of a quiet heart, and say, "I am without all fear;" for I have with me the Son of God, whom God hath given unto me by his love, and by the gospel which assures me of it. And thy word, O Lord, and thy Son Jesus, will not deceive me, in whom alone I put my trust. If I be weak in faith, grant me grace that I may believe more stedfastly. For besides this I have no other help in this evident gift and love of God, but that we should all, by a little, and a little, believe more and more in this gift. And the stronger faith is, the greater is the joy, pleasure, and security, that is felt rising in the mind, so that we are ready to do and suffer all that God requires of us, knowing that He is loving, and uses nothing but love toward us.

But thou wilt say, If I were as Peter, Paul, and Mary were, this gift would be comfortable unto me. For they are saints, and doubtless this saying pertains but unto them. How should I, who am a sinner, by any means understand that it pertains unto me, who have so often offended God by my sins, and have made him my enemy? But such thoughts are nothing but mere incredulity and unbelief, which goeth about to withdraw us from this sweet gospel. And truly unbelief can be overcome by no other means than by the word of God. Of this Christ spake—that we should not doubt of this word; saying, that his Father, the true and eternal God in heaven, did so love the world, that he deli-

vered his only begotten Son. And this is sure, that the world here does not signify Mary, Peter, and Paul only; but the world signifies all mankind. Therefore if thou takest thyself to be of mankind, or if thou dost not believe that, compare thyself with other mortal men, that thou mayest understand that thou art a man. For why shouldest thou not suffer thyself to be of this name, seeing that Christ with plain words saith, that God gave not his Son only for Mary, Peter, and Paul, but for the world, that all should receive him that are the sons of men. Then if thou or I would not receive him, as though he did not appertain unto us, truly it would consequently follow, that Christ's words are not true, whereas he saith he was given and delivered for the world. Wherefore it appears that the contrary thereto is most assuredly true, that this gift belongs as well unto thee as to Peter and Paul, forasmuch as thou also art a man as they were, and a portion of the world; that God may not be judged in his word, and this thought rise in our heart, thinking on this wise, Who knoweth whether I am also of their number, to whom the Son of God is given, and eternal life promised. For that is as much as to make God untrue to his promise. Wherefore when this thought comes upon thee, suspect it, as thou wouldest suspect the devil, lest thou be therewith deceived. And say thou, What is that to me, that I am neither Peter nor Paul? If God would have given this gift to them only that should have been found worthy, he would have given it to the angels, to the sun, and to the moon; for they are pure and undefiled creatures, which always obey God, and never decline or swerve from his precepts. But this is the truth of the matter, he gave Him to the world, and the world is no worthier thereof than as I said before. Wherefore, although I am neither Peter nor Paul, yet will I not suffer myself to put aside this gift, but will challenge as much for my part as David and all the holy apostles did. Whatsoever I am, yet God is not to be taken as unfaithful to his promise. I am a portion of the world, wherefore if I take not this gift as mine own, I MAKE GOD UNTRUE.

But thou wilt say, Why does He not show this to me alone? Then I would believe and think surely that it appertained unto me. But it is for a great consideration that God speaks here so generally; to the intent, verily, that no man should think that he is excluded from this promise and gift. He that excludes himself must give an account why he does so. I will not judge them, saith He, but they shall be

judged of their own mouth. For this gift was given to the world, and they, by their unbelief and mistrust of God's word, will not receive it. Yet if a man will consider well, he shall perceive that baptism and also the communion of the body and blood of Christ were ordained, that every man should take this gift frankly and freely as his own. We are saved, then, only by the mercy of God; and we obtain this grace only by faith, without virtue, without merits, and without works. For the whole matter that is necessary to the getting of everlasting life and remission of sins is altogether and fully comprehended in the love and mercy of God, through Christ. God grant us his grace that we may believe and trust to this surely—that we may suffer all things with a glad and ready heart, and may so die that we may be saved for ever, through his Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[*Extracted from the Works of Thomas Becon, one of the English Reformers, who was born A. D. 1510; died 1567.*]

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## H Y M N.

HATH the invitation ended,  
 Is the cry of mercy dumb?  
 Still salvation is extended,  
 Still the call is—"freely come."  
 Still for sinners Jesus pleadeth  
 In compassion's gentlest tones,  
 Still the Spirit intercedeth,  
 With unutterable groans.  
 Still the Bride, the Church would gather  
 Every wanderer to the fold;—  
 Still the everlasting Father  
 Would with love each child behold.  
 Then let every soul that thirsteth  
 Freely to this fount repair,  
 And while yet the tide out-bursteth  
 Drink and grow immortal there.

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[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]



## THE WELL OF LIVING WATER.

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*"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money : come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*—ISAIAH lv. 1.

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It is God who is speaking to us in these gracious words. It is he who says, *Ho!* and thus calls the attention of heedless men to his message of love. It is God himself, even our own God, who is thus calling on the children of men to come to the waters. He sees men every where turned away from Him, wandering in search of other objects, their ear closed against every voice, but that of the world, and He summons their attention. He invites them to stop and listen to his message. Ho, every heedless sinner; ho, every thirsty soul, there are tidings for thee! *Come to the waters!*

Is this invitation, then, to all sinners without exception? Or is it only a certain class that is addressed? Are all invited just as sinners? Is every one at once to take the message as spoken to himself? Or is it only those who are *qualified and prepared* in some way that are addressed? It is evident that the term "thirsty," is here used not to single out a peculiar class of sinners, but simply to describe the natural unhappy state of every unconverted soul. The thirst spoken of is not the thirsting after *righteousness*, but simply the sense of misery, and the desire to be happy which is in every fallen child of Adam, before he ever begins to thirst after righteousness at all. This is plain from the second verse, where those who are invited are described as "spending money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." That is to say, they are poor worldlings, throwing away their all upon vanity; toiling for what cannot feed their souls, nor yield them any return. Their way of spending their money and their labour, is one which will do nothing for their souls

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It brings them no ease. It does not fill the dreary void of the heart, that is left by the absence of God. It leaves them emptier, thirstier, hungrier, than before. These are the men that are invited. They are the same that Jesus invites when he says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" in which words he speaks of the burden which every man is bearing, who remains away from God, just as the prophet declares the thirst that every man is enduring, who has forsaken the fountain of living waters.

The words are therefore addressed to *all*! COME YE TO THE WATERS. To every sorrowful soul that says, "Who will shew me any good;" to every weary sinner that would fain be happy, but knows not how; to every worldly sinner that is drinking from the world's broken cisterns;—to all such, it is said, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Here then is God's solemn declaration, that *there are waters*. It is no uncertain, no doubtful thing. There is such a thing as perfect blessedness for the soul. Most men seem to think, that as they have long gone from one thing to another, seeking happiness, and have always failed, they must just be contented to remain unhappy and make the best of a bad bargain. They have had their trials, but they are not worse off than others. They do not say that they have got their heart's desire, but merely that they have got all a man is likely to get, and have therefore no right to complain. This is the best the poor soul can hope for, in that world to which he clings so fondly!

But *there are waters*! There are none in the world; it is a wilderness. But they are to be found in God. God says he has waters for us. He has that which will satisfy the soul; which will give us perfect peace,—something that will make us supremely—infinately blessed, so that we shall never thirst again. And he not only provides those, but he presses us to come to them. He would not have us remain another hour without them. It is the poor and the miserable that he invites; and he repeats the message, "Come ye," to shew how earnestly he is pressing us to come. And lest we should imagine that we are to buy or to earn these blessings ourselves, he tells us they are altogether free. They have been bought for us already. They are ours for the taking. It is not needful that we should have something of our own to buy them with. Our get-

ting them does not depend upon our *having* any thing, but takes for granted our *wanting* every thing. Our plea with God is not what we have, but what we need. Nor does the word “buy” here used, contradict this. It is employed to shew us that though we have nothing, we are to come with the same confidence as if we had the full purchase-money to give! Though we could buy them all ourselves, we could not be more certain of obtaining these blessings! “Buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Every kind of enjoyment—every kind of refreshment is to be found here. And all free,—all within your reach. It matters not how poor you be,—how sinful, how helpless, how undeserving,—the waters are *free*,—free to the vilest, free to you! Come with all your poverty, with all your guilt, with all your misery, and take the free waters of this “pure river, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.” Drink and be blessed! Drink, yea drink abundantly! Why spend money for that which will not satisfy your soul? God expostulates with you, in regard to this. He asks you, Is it wise to act thus? is it reasonable? is it not madness in the extreme? why then persist in it? why not come at once, and drink freely of the water of life?

Hear how God addresses you, and how again he says, “Hearken unto me; incline your ear, hear and your soul shall live.” Thus we are taught that the source of all our misery is our not hearkening to God. We have hearkened to ourselves, to our friends, to the world, to the devil, but we have refused to listen to God. This has been our misery. Now the cure is just the opposite. We must *listen to God*. How simple, how blessed! The entrance of his words giveth light and peace. In hearkening to him we shall find life to our souls. **HEAR**, and your souls shall live. Listen and live. No more! Oh sinner, could life be had on easier terms than this? Could salvation be brought nearer, or made freer than this?

There is in us a constant tendency to come to God with money and with price,—to do something to distinguish ourselves from others, and to get out of the common state of mankind; and in this spirit men read the words of the Holy Ghost, and instead of encouraging words, they make them discouraging. Thus, when it is said, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” people say, “Yes, but I must *come*; if I do not

come I will not get the rest." Now the intention of God is to fix your attention on the person to whom you are to come,—come unto me; but in a self-righteous state we fix our thoughts on the *Come*; and we suppose this must be the money, this must be the price, and get at once into difficulties as to the way we should come.

The Holy Ghost has used a *variety* of expressions, in order to prevent this error, and yet men will fall into it. For example, it is said in one place, *Come*; in another place it is said, *Look*; in another *Believe*; in another *Hear*; all to prevent your fixing on the act of your own mind, and to fix your attention on the object, which is Jesus Christ. Had it been any other subject than that of salvation, people would have committed no mistake about it. If I had said, "Hear! I have good news for you;" you would never have asked, How am I to hear? If I had said, "Look, and you will be rejoiced at what you see;" you would never have asked, how you were to look? If I had said, "Believe and you will find it much to your advantage;" you would merely consider whether what I said was true, without thinking of the act of believing. It is not our own *act* of believing, but the *object* believed, that is to bring us hope and peace. If we seek to draw our hope from *knowing* that we have believed, we are as far from the spirit of the gospel as the man who rests his hopes upon his alms-deeds. When we make our own faith the source of comfort, we are drawing from a broken cistern. It is impossible to obtain peace, or strength, or holiness, from *knowing* that we believe a fact, however true and important that fact may be. The fact believed may be a comfort to us; but our *knowing* that we believe it cannot be so. When seeking peace for the soul, the question is not "Have we believed?" but "Has God, in very deed, made his Son a propitiation for sin?" Why is it that when such expressions are used in religion, they turn people's attention away from the *thing* spoken of to *themselves*? Just because men would turn the act of believing, looking, &c. (which is a bare receiving of what God says,) into the money and the price by which to purchase what God gives. The variety of expressions used,—*Come, Hear, Look, Believe*,—is employed in order that we might not turn our attention away from what God says, and be taken up with thinking about some particular way of receiving it,—"Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make



an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David ;"—“ this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” Thus the news which God sends you, is, just like every other piece of news, to put you in the attitude of a *listener*, and not of doing something of your own.

The thing which God is here said to give, is *life*, not mere safety, and security from wrath,—not mere deliverance from hell. What, then, is this eternal life which God gives you ? God’s gift is his *own* life ; not the life of mere enjoyment—the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field have that life—but the life which God himself had before worlds were. In other words, the purpose of God is not simply to make you happy, but to make you happy with God’s own happiness ;—not simply to give you joy, but to give you the joy of the Lord ;—not simply to make you drink of the rivers of pleasure, but to make you drink out of the rivers of God’s own pleasures, and out of the fountains of God’s own happiness, that your joy should be the very same as his, springing from the very same source, and produced by the very same cause. God’s best gifts are no portion for man. He himself is the soul’s only portion ;—he that does not know God as the light, the life, the blessedness of his soul, knows not God, and is without a portion at all ! Life eternal does not consist in knowing that there is a God, and that there is a Saviour, but in knowing God, and knowing the Saviour, as the child knows his father, and as the friend knows his friend. Till we see Him and feel Him in his perpetually pervading presence of infinite holiness, and love, and beauty, and wisdom, we cannot be said to know that God for whom we were created. This presence of his is our real home and our real joy, and until we become sensible of it, we are without a home, without a joy, and without a portion in the universe ! We are friendless and desolate !

God himself is the soul’s inheritance : The Lord’s portion is his people, and the people’s portion is the Lord. God himself, I say, is our inheritance. My enjoyment is to be in God, so that it continues as long as I continue and God exists, although the whole of creation were swept away. How, then, is God to be thus enjoyed ? A person is to be thus an heir of God, *by having God’s own character in him*. You may enjoy God’s gifts, without enjoying his mind ; but you cannot enjoy God himself,

without having his mind. If there is a person who has the power, and also the inclination to bestow much kindness upon me, I may feel an interest in that person and like his kindness, but if that person is to be enjoyed himself, apart from his gifts, it must be something in his character, something in his mind, something in him that would exist although his gifts should cease, from which my enjoyment is to spring. Now I cannot rejoice in God's holiness unless I am holy; I cannot rejoice in God's love unless I love; I cannot rejoice in God's righteousness unless I am righteous, nor in his truth unless I am true. Therefore it is, that in being renewed, we are said to be made partakers of the divine nature, and are called to have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus.

This, then, is the thing contemplated, when God says, Come to the waters. These are the waters: it is something in drinking of which you will be partakers of a divine nature,—something in drinking of which you will share in God's own blessedness. Where are these waters? How is man to be partaker of a divine nature? How am I to feel as God feels? How am I, who by nature hate my God, and hate my neighbour, to love as God loves—to be holy as God is holy? Where is the provision for all this? It is in the sure mercies of David.—“Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.”

Now, do you understand these things—do you see the difference between God's giving you *a* happiness, and God giving you *his own* happiness, and that this last is what God gives you in Christ? Are you giving God glory for this unspeakable gift? And can you bear witness that it is eternal life to know Christ? Can you, individually, say of what you have heard, “I know it is God's plan, because I am under its operation; it is taking effect in me; I find all things pertaining to life and godliness in Christ Jesus; I am made a sharer in a divine nature?” If not, you are still without God and without hope in the world. If not, you are not of that family of which Jesus Christ is the elder brother; you have not in you the mind of Christ. You may be earnest—you may be serious—you may be pains-taking, but you are not yet a Christian; God's plan has not yet been accomplished in you.

I beseech you see if this be the case. If so, and if God's purpose is not accomplished in you, why is it so? What is

your excuse? There can be no excuse, for there can be no reason but one. You are making God a liar. You are refusing to believe the record which He hath given you of his Son. There is no excuse but this horrid one, that when God is giving you in Christ all things pertaining to life and godliness, you do not believe that all these things are yours; and your reason for making God a liar, for refusing to believe that these things are yours, is the pride of your heart.

The pride of the heart, in respect of pardon, is, that a man would have it said that he himself had bought it. Though you should, in doing what you can in the way of purchase, say it is little, and talk of its unworthiness, and call this humility, your *ATTEMPT* to purchase, sufficiently shews your pride; and all your professions of humility will not screen you from the charge which God has against you, for not rejoicing in what he has provided for you in Christ—for refusing to glorify him in giving thanks for his unspeakable gift. There are waters for you;—free to you at this moment,—open to you as you are! God invites and welcomes you to the fountain; yet you will not come,—or when you think of coming, you insist upon bringing a price in your hand. This is your *pride*, your presumption. O let it not be your ruin!

I have now declared to you the gospel of the grace of God; and I beseech you that you refuse not the word spoken, for that word shall judge you at the last day; and take heed that you are not found at that day on the left hand of the throne, from being too proud to receive salvation *freely*—to take the water of life *without money and without price*. This is the awful condemnation.

Oh, then, wilt thou not come to the waters and take them freely? And if thou canst not—if thine evil heart of unbelief will not allow thee—wilt thou not cry to him who made thy heart, and who can new-make it, and ask *Him* to lead thee to these living streams? And surely he will lead thee. “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” The woman of Samaria had told our Lord that he ought not to have thought of asking anything of her, on account of the disputes between his nation and hers. Such is the love of man to man! The Jew refuses water to the Samaritan, and the Samaritan to the Jew! But such is

not the love of God! His is a free and boundless love, which gives liberally to all. If she had known the fulness of that love—how willing to give and how much it had already given unasked—she could not have allowed one suspicion to enter her mind. If she had known that he who spoke to her was himself the great gift of God to a lost world, and the dispenser of all other gifts, she would have asked, and he would have given her living water! He speaks of his giving as the natural consequence of her asking! How touching the declaration, how precious the promise! *Sinner as she was*, He told her that she had but to ask, and she was *sure* of receiving! *Sinner as she was*, she sought and she obtained!—she asked and He gave! Ask, then, and *you* shall receive; and when you receive, oh! then, all is well: the darkness is past, and the true light has risen! “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.”

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### HYMN.

Ho ye thirsty! parch'd and fainting,  
 Here are waters, turn and see!  
 To the thirstiest, poorest, vilest,  
 Without money, all is free —  
 Thirsty sinner!

Drink and stay not, 'tis for thee.

Ho ye weary! toiling, burden'd,  
 With a world of woes oppress;  
 Come!—it is thy Lord invites thee,  
 Lay thy head upon my breast.  
 Weary sinner!

Come to Jesus, come and rest.

Ho ye wounded! bruised, broken,  
 Come, and health divine receive;  
 Look to him who heals the wounded,  
 He alone can healing give.  
 Wounded sinner!

Look to Jesus, look and live.

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[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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ANDREW JACK, PRINTER, EDINBURGH.



## JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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"Thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God."—EZEK. xvi. 14.

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GIVE me leave to ask you one question: Can you say the Lord our righteousness? Were you ever made to see and admire the all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and excited by the Spirit of God to hunger and thirst after it? Could you ever say, My soul is athirst for Christ, yea, even for the righteousness of Christ? O when shall I come to appear before the presence of my God in the righteousness of Christ! Nothing but Christ! nothing but Christ! Give me Christ, O God, and I am satisfied! my soul shall praise thee for ever.

Was this ever the language of your hearts? and, after these inward conflicts, were you ever enabled to reach out the arm of faith, and embrace the blessed Jesus in your souls, so that you could say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" If so, fear not, whoever you are. Hail, all hail, you happy souls! The Lord, the Lord Christ, the everlasting God, is your righteousness. Christ has justified you, who is he that condemneth you? Christ has died for you, nay, rather, is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for you. Being now justified by his grace, you have peace with God, and shall, ere long, be with Jesus in glory. For there is no condemnation to those that are really in Christ Jesus. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or life, or death, all is yours, if you are Christ's, for Christ is God's. My brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you! O think of the love of Christ in dying for you! If the Lord be your righteousness, let the righteousness of your Lord be continually in your mouth. Talk of, O talk of, and recommend, the righteousness of Christ, when you lie down, and when you rise up, at your going out and coming in! Think of the greatness of the gift, as well as of the giver! Shew to all the world, in whom you have believed! Let all by your fruits know that the Lord is your righteousness, and that you are waiting for your Lord from heaven! O study to be holy, even as he who has called you, and washed you

in his blood was holy ! O think of his dying love ! Let that love constrain you to obedience ! having much forgiven, love much. Be always asking, What shall I do to express my gratitude to the Lord, for giving me his righteousness ! Let that self-abasing God-exalting question, be always in your mouths, " Why me, Lord ? why me ? " why am I taken and others left ? why is the Lord *my* righteousness ? why is he become *my* salvation, who have so often deserved damnation at his hands ?

But I must turn a little from congratulating you, to invite poor Christless sinners to come to him, and accept of his righteousness, that they may have life. Alas, my heart almost bleeds ! What a multitude of precious souls are now before me ! how shortly must all be ushered into eternity ! and yet, O cutting thought ! were God now to require all your souls, how few could really say, the Lord *our* righteousness.

And think you, *O sinners*, that you will be able to stand in the day of judgment, if Christ be not your righteousness ! No, that alone is the wedding-garment in which you must appear. O Christless sinners, I am distressed for you ! the desires of my soul are enlarged. O that this may be an accepted time ! That the Lord may be *your* righteousness ! For whither would you flee, if death should find you naked ? O think of death ! O think of judgment ! Yet a little while, and time shall be no more ; and then what will become of you, if the Lord be not your righteousness ? Think you that Christ will spare you ? No, he that formed you will have no mercy on you. If you be not of Christ, if Christ be not your righteousness, Christ himself shall pronounce you damned. And can you bear to think of being damned by Christ ? Can you bear to hear the Lord Jesus say to you, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Can you live, think you, in everlasting burnings ? Is your flesh brass, and your bones iron ? What if they be ? hell-fire, that fire prepared for the devil and his angels, will heat them through and through. And can you bear to depart from Christ ? O that heart-piercing thought ! Ask those holy souls, who are at any time bewailing an absent God, who walk in darkness, and see no light, though but a few days or hours ; ask them, what it is to lose a sight and presence of Christ ? See how they seek him sorrowing, and go mourning after him all the day long ! And, if it be so

dreadful to lose the sensible presence of Christ only for a day, what must it be to be banished from him to all eternity?

But this it must be, if Christ be not your righteousness: For God's justice must be satisfied; and unless Christ's righteousness is imputed and applied to you here, you must hereafter be satisfying the divine justice in hell-torments eternally; nay, Christ himself shall condemn you to that place of torment. And how cutting is that thought! Methinks I see poor, trembling, Christless wretches, standing before the bar of God, crying out, Lord, if we must be damned, let some angel, or some archangel, pronounce the damnatory sentence: but all in vain. Christ himself shall pronounce the irrevocable sentence. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, let me persuade you to close with Christ, and never rest until you can say, "the Lord our righteousness." Who knows but the Lord may have mercy on, nay, abundantly pardon you? You need not fear the greatness or number of your sins. For are you sinners? so am I. Are you the chief of sinners? so am I. Are you backsliding sinners? so am I. And yet the Lord (for ever adored be his rich, free, and sovereign grace!) the Lord is my righteousness. Come, then, *O young men*, who (as I acted once myself) are playing the prodigal, and wandering away afar off from your heavenly Father's house, come home, come home, and leave your swine's trough. Feed no longer on the husks of sensual delights: for Christ's sake arise, and come home! your heavenly Father now calls you. See, yonder the best robe, even the righteousness of his dear Son, awaits you. See it, view it again and again. Consider at how dear a rate it was purchased, even by the blood of God. Consider what great need you have of it. You are lost, undone, damned for ever, without it. Come then, poor, guilty prodigals, come home; indeed, I will not, like the elder brother in the Gospel, be angry; no, I will rejoice with the angels in heaven. And O that God would now bow the heavens and come down! Descend, O Son of God, descend; and, as thou hast shown in me such mercy, O let thy blessed Spirit apply thy righteousness to some young prodigals now before thee, and clothe their naked souls with thy best robe!

And what shall I say to you of a middle age, you *busy merchants*, you *cumbered Marthas*, who, with all your gettings, have not yet gotten the Lord to be your righteous-

ness ! Alas ! what profit will there be of all your labour under the sun, if you do not secure this pearl of invaluable price ? I see, also, many *hoary heads* here, and perhaps the most of them cannot say, the Lord is my righteousness. O grey-headed sinners, I could weep over you ! your grey hairs, which ought to be your crown, and in which perhaps you glory, are now your shame. You know not that the Lord is your righteousness : O haste then, haste ye, aged sinners, and seek an interest in redeeming love ! Alas, you have one foot already in the grave, your glass is just running out, your sun is just going down, and it will set and leave you in an eternal darkness, unless the Lord be your righteousness ! Flee, then, O flee for your lives ! be not afraid. All things are possible with God. If you come, though it be at the eleventh hour, Christ Jesus will in no wise cast you out. Seek then for the Lord to be your righteousness, and beseech him to let you know how it is that a man may be born again when he is old !

But I must not forget the *lambs* of the flock. To feed them, was one of my Lord's last commands. I know he will be angry with me, if I do not tell them that the Lord may be *their* righteousness ; and that of such is the kingdom of heaven. Come, then, ye little children, come to Christ ; the Lord shall be *your* righteousness. Do not think that you are too young to be converted. Perhaps many of you may be nine or ten years old, and yet cannot say, the Lord is our righteousness ; which many have said, though younger than you. Come, then, while you are young. Perhaps you may not live to be old. Do not stay for other people. If your fathers and mothers will not come to Christ, do you come without them. Let children lead them, and shew them how the Lord may be *their* righteousness. Our Lord Jesus loved little children. You are his lambs ; he bids me feed you. I pray God make you willing betimes to take the Lord for your righteousness.

[Extracted from one of Whitefield's sermons.]

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[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## SIN PUT AWAY BY CHRIST.

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*"But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.—HEB. ix. 26.*

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THIS verse states the end for which the Saviour of the world appeared. It was "to put away sin." This end he has accomplished. It is no longer a mere purpose, something future; but already finished. He has done that which he came into the world to do. He hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. That sacrifice was offered and accepted eighteen hundred years ago. And by that sacrifice sin was put away. If sin was not put away then, it certainly has not been put away since, nor can ever be. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; there is no other putting away of it. The offering up of that sacrifice, and the putting away of sin, are things now past. And both of these were finished together upon the cross. We have therefore glad tidings to proclaim to every sinner; glad tidings for thee, whosoever thou art, who readest these lines. Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself!

But in what sense has He put away sin? Not in the sense of putting it out of existence. He has not put it away so that it has ceased to be. It still exists, as you know, and perhaps lament. It exists in your heart, and it exists in your life. It mingles in every thought of the one, and in every act of the other. To such an extent does it exist, that in God's pure all-seeing eye, there seems to be nothing in either but sin. The whole is nothing but one vast mass of sin. In this sense sin is not put away from any in the world that now is;—so far from it, that it overspreads the whole race of man, as widely as the waters of Noah's deluge overspread the earth. To that eye which takes in the whole of it at one glance, and sees the guilt of each man minutely and fully, so hateful a sight does this guilty world present, that the wonder is,

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that God does not put sin away by the destruction of every being on whom it appears. So awful a doom could only be stayed, even for a moment, by that sacrifice of Himself, which Christ has offered up. This sacrifice is the only barrier between a guilty world and the wrath of an angry God. It is the only thing that prevents the vengeance of eternal fire being poured out for the instant destruction of this sinful earth.

Neither has Christ put away sin in such a sense that it cannot and will not be punished. Notwithstanding what He has done, it may be punished, and it is punished in the case of thousands and tens of thousands in the world of woe. Christ's death has not blotted hell out of being. It has not quenched the everlasting burnings, so as to make it an impossible thing that any sinner should ever feel them. He has done everything that is necessary to keep you, or any, even the guiltiest sinner upon earth, from going to hell. But hell still exists, and the work of Christ has not made it impossible that you should fall into it. And notwithstanding that work, the penalty of sin—*of all your sin*—may yet be inflicted on your soul there, even as at this very moment it is inflicted upon countless myriads of souls, once within the reach of mercy. Just read these two plain passages (and there are thousands of such) Eph. v. 3—6; Col. iii. 5, 6; and beware of flattering yourselves that because Christ hath put away sin, you shall not be punished. On the contrary, while that precious fact proclaims that forgiveness is free to all—free to *you* just now, and as you are; nothing in the universe proclaims so loudly that escape from punishment is impossible, and condemnation inevitable, if you refuse what has thus been so generously provided. Even Christ himself, who was God clothed with our nature, behoved to die, because standing in the room of the guilty. And while this fact proclaims to us that none need to die for their own sins, since this mighty One has died for sin already, it also declares that none can possibly escape from death on whom any sin shall at last be found. For if it was punished when found upon the Son of God, though not his own, is there any being, even the highest in creation, that can escape, if even so much as one sin be found in him?

Christ then hath not put away sin, so that it does not exist or cannot be punished. But he hath already put away sin, in such a sense that it no more stands as an obstacle in the way of your going to God. He has so put it away that you may go to God just now and as you are,

with all your filth and sin, even as a child goes to the bosom of its own father. He has so put it away that you may go to him with every thing you fear, to spread it out before Him,—with every thing you want, to obtain it from Him. He has so put it away that you may go to him now with all boldness, nothing doubting. That which gives you access at all, gives you access with boldness, and assures you of a welcome. That which gives you *any hope* at all, gives you *every hope*, nay, takes away all ground for unbelief or fear. Where is there room for doubt, or suspicion, or want of assured confidence, if Christ has really done all that this passage declares he has? Once your sin was such a barrier that there was no access to God, the fountain of life, for a guilty creature like you. It made a gulf between you and that blessed fountain, which, but for the work of Christ, none could ever have crossed. It barred his throne—it shut his presence against you. It made you, for anything you could do, an eternal exile from that presence, which is the paradise of the soul, and where there are rivers of pleasure for ever. And but for the work of Christ putting away your sin, this exclusion must have continued for ever. But blessed be his precious name, He hath now put away sin, so that there is no more exclusion of you, or any poor sinner upon earth. The sentence of banishment is repealed. The throne of God now stands open to you. There is not an obstacle, not a single stone or straw in your way to it. It is open and free to all. God is now calling his banished ones home. He is inviting you to himself just now—inviting you once more to share in all the fulness that is in Himself. And on this invitation, and because the Lamb of God has put away sin, you may go to Him at this moment as freely and confidently as if you had never sinned at all. You may go to Him with as confident a heart as any of the unfallen angels round his throne. Nay, more so, for they approach on the ground of a creature's innocence—you are invited near on the righteousness of Him, who is God over all. And coming on this ground you may freely ask for every thing, in the full assurance that all shall be given till you happen to ask for something better and dearer to God, than what he has given you already unasked—*His own Son*. Poor wanderers! why not on such a ground return to such a home? Why stand afar off in poverty, rags and wretchedness, when through the sacrifice of His own Son, the way to your Father's house, your Father's arms, the fulness of your Father's love, is entirely open? Luke xv.

Christ hath also put away sin in so far as it was an obstacle in the way of God's love flowing forth most freely towards us, towards any sinner upon earth, towards the poor guilty sinner who may now be reading these lines. In consequence of the sacrifice of Himself, none of our past or present sins are any reason why that love should not fix on you, and enrich you with all its boundless treasures. Notwithstanding them all, God can, honourably to himself, and safely in respect to his government, make you its blessed object, and pour out upon you its immeasurable, inexhaustible riches. And what He *can* do He is most willing to do. You have the assurance of this in the numberless invitations by which He is inviting you to come to Himself for every thing.<sup>1</sup> For each one of these is as much addressed to you personally and specially, as if it had been inscribed with your own name, or sent to you expressly down from heaven. And all of them not only imply that he is ready, but even longing to bless you with the free forgiveness, the overflowing love of a Father's heart. These are just the calls of His love to you—now that all obstacles are taken out of the way of its freest and most unlimited exercise—they are the voice of love sounding upon earth in the ears of every poor wanderer, a welcome to all the treasures of a father's grace, a welcome to the place of a son in a father's heart. And of this blessed fact you have likewise the assurance in the past doings of that same love. What has it already done to take every obstacle away that once withstood your enjoying it? What has it already given? It has given His own Son. This is the measure, the manifestation of the Father's love! Think of it. Try and take its dimensions. That gift proves it infinite. And dare you not trust an *infinite* love—that love being also free? Dare you not cast yourself without reserve or fear upon a love that is perfectly *free* and perfectly *infinite*? And now that it is as free to flow out upon you, as the very light or air of heaven, can you not leave yourself at its disposal? can you not expect every thing great and blessed at its hands? If there is nothing in the way of that free and infinite love, why may not *you* enjoy it, as much as any guilty sinner that has ever gone before you? And from that love which has already given the Son, and thus made a free course for every other, may you not hope to receive even "all things?" If it gave even the Son, when every

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. Rev. xxii. 17.

obstacle stood in the way, what will it not give now that every obstacle has been taken out of the way by the propitiation for sin which that Son has made? Before that sacrifice was offered, it might be said to be pent up and confined in the Father's bosom, waiting till the hindrance should be removed. Now it is no longer pent up. It has a righteous opening out of which it may issue forth, and a righteous channel along which to pour itself. Now it is streaming over on every side. It is flowing on in full tide towards sinners. It is seeking to flow in to each of you. And it would enter if you would not close your hearts against it. It would come in and fill your soul with its blessed peace, just as the light pours in when the eye is opened upon the sun. As there is no more obstacle in the way of the poor prodigal's return to his father, so is there no more any obstacle in the way of the Father's most gracious welcome to the poor prodigal. The one is free to return, the other to receive; the one may come without fear, the other may welcome without dishonour. Christ has made way for both at once, and by the same act—the sacrifice of Himself. Now that the way is open, and a Father's arms stretched wide to welcome thee, poor prodigal wilt thou not return?

In a word, Christ hath put away sin, so that now it is no more a necessary and unavoidable cause of punishment to those who have personally committed it. But for His sacrifice, it would and must have been so in every case whatever. The honour of God's character, and the safety of His holy moral government, would have made this indispensable. But the one is now so entirely vindicated, and the other so inviolably protected by the one great sacrifice of the cross, that no necessity now compels the moral Governor of the universe to punish sin in the person of those who commit it. In consequence of that one great event, and on the ground of it, God can now most honourably dispense forgiveness and eternal life to every guilty rebel upon earth, and that most freely—without any restriction or term whatever—even without money and without price. That great sacrifice did more to vindicate His character and uphold the rectitude of his government, than the eternal death of all would have done. In so far as these are concerned, that one event, once for all, has therefore rendered this unnecessary; and God is accordingly, in consideration of *that* alone, with which He is entirely and for ever satisfied, now offering to pass from the sentence of death in the case of every sinner whatever, who



is wishing it at His hands. And should any necessity henceforth arise for inflicting eternal death, it must be created by the sinner himself—by his obstinate refusal to accept deliverance, so generously procured, so freely offered—put thus freely and entirely at his own disposal. Poor soul! just look to the sacrifice of the cross, and tell me after this why *you* should die? That was the sacrifice of *Himself*, God in your flesh! Think of Him who was the lawgiver, rising up from his throne, and in the nature of a creature rendering obedience to its utmost demands. Was not this doing higher homage to the Majesty of God's holy I w, than could have been done by the entire and eternal obedience of all mere creatures? After this, what can be needed to assert its dignity, and maintain its honour? Think of Him who was God over all, the source of all life and being, and, therefore, by infinite degrees better than all,—think of Him in our flesh, dying in the room of the guilty! It is in consequence of this, and this alone, that God is now proclaiming free forgiveness to all. He can give you pardon and eternal life, free as He gives you the light of His sun; and in consequence of the sacrifice of Himself, no stain is thereby cast on His character, no danger accrues to His holy government. This is the righteous and honourable way in which the holy Governor of the universe is now offering life to all of our fallen race. Go, poor sinner, take it at His hand. Go to Him and be pardoned. Go to Him and be freely loved. Go to Him and live for ever. All has been done that is necessary for this. All you need now waits your mere acceptance. Sin, the only obstacle, has, in the sense just stated, been taken away. All sacrifice has now ceased. Why? Because *that* has been offered which answers all. Look to that sacrifice, and to that alone—and if the Spirit sheds His light upon it, it will also satisfy you. It will satisfy your conscience, and take from it the conviction that sin must also be punished in you. That is your life, your light, your peace, your joy, your all. That and that alone will fill you with a sense of forgiveness—*will assure you of every thing*, by assuring you that God is pacified—that God is your friend.

There is no room for any soul to deprive himself of all this comfort by saying—"but is it my sin? no doubt He hath put away some sin, but can I be sure it is mine?" There is no room for such a question, if the sense above stated be given to the words. *In that sense*, it is all sin that is put away. Mark the very language, "to put away



sin"—sin in general—not some person's merely, but *sin*. Think of the sense above given to the words, and ask yourselves if it be not the burden of the whole gospel, the sum and substance of the good news proclaimed therein to every sinner without exception; that considered as a necessary cause of eternal death to the guilty, or as any barrier in the way of coming to God, and of God's full tide of love coming to him, sin hath been put away from every poor soul, still in this world and on this side of hell. Besides, if this were not true of all, how could it be true of any? Where could even the Apostle Paul, or any of the Apostles or primitive Christians, obtain the assurance of *their* sins being put away, if it was not in the general declaration respecting Christ's offering once for all. They had no revelation of this blessed fact, special and peculiar to themselves. If they found it at all, they found it just in such an universal declaration as that before us. If *they* found it there, why may not *you*—why may not any? Their names are no more there than *yours*. And if sin has already been put away by the *sacrifice of Himself*, how, if that sacrifice did not put away yours, can you expect them to be put away now and henceforth by something done in or by yourself? In that case, yours would be put away, not by the *sacrifice of Himself*, but by *something in you*? If by that sacrifice, the thing is done eighteen hundred years ago; if not then, should it ever be done, it must be owing, not to Christ's sacrifice, but to *something else* which is future and yet to be done.

Oh that men but knew the completeness, perfection, infinite efficacy of this one sacrifice, and the absolute freeness with which, on the ground of it and of it alone, all the blessings of salvation are offered to every sinner without exception. The knowledge of this would ease their hearts at once, would assure them at once of every thing—of safety, of free forgiveness, yea, even of life everlasting. This grand atonement is the ground of all assurance. Look to the subsequent context, and say if it be not so, (ch. x. 19–22.) What is the blessed doctrine of this context? Is it not that Christ hath done by the one offering of Himself, once for all, what all the offerings under the law could not do, and which their very repetition proved they could not do? All offering is ceased, just because there is remission now free to all, (verse 18.) And what is the result of the whole in respect to us? Why just that we may come with consciences entirely disburdened by this one offering, of all dread and apprehension, even in

the full assurance of faith, that in his Son God is now well pleased. In this blessed and child-like assurance we may now go to God as our Father for every thing we need or wish for, in this world and in the world to come? Oh yes, this sacrifice is the ground of all assurance. It is the mere sight of this sacrifice in all its glorious sufficiency, that heals our whole spiritual case—that sets us right at once with God, and makes us safe for eternity. It is not the sight of this sacrifice and *something else*—something of our own added thereto, our own faith in it for instance, that assures the soul before God and forms the ground of everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Our faith is just our seeing that this sacrifice is complete and perfect by itself alone, neither needing nor admitting the addition of anything else whatever, as a ground of confidence, a ground of child-like approach to God. For this, it is the sacrifice alone that needs to be seen, and not our faith along with it. It is because we think that *the latter* must be seen along with *the former*, and because we are always going in quest of the latter as the more important of the two, that our souls see no light, or the mere twilight, the mingling of light and darkness. In seeking the latter, we lose sight of the former, and therefore of all our light and comfort, for it is the former which is the source of all. Oh that you would look to the sacrifice alone, and by itself. Nothing else but that sacrifice seen in all its solitary naked glory, is necessary to make a heaven within your hearts even now, and make you sure of heaven hereafter. I want nothing as my ground of confidence before God, as the means of assuring me of everything; nothing between me and hell, but the simple sacrifice of Christ. Let me see just that sacrifice, and I see the everlasting proof that there is a love in the heart of God, which is absolutely infinite, and which is now free to me and to every human being whatever. Can more be needed? Can more be obtained? This is *all*. “None but Christ—none but Christ.”

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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THE  
WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,

AS RECORDED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

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*The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.—JOHN xiv. 17.*

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GOD has lately been sending showers of his Spirit upon many dry places of Scotland,—“he has caused waters to run down like rivers.” At such a time, therefore, it is specially needful for us to remember the words of the Lord, “Them that honour me I will honour.” For how bitter would be our regret, and how awful our responsibility, if we were to grieve him away by neglect. Reader, may the Lord keep you from this sin, lest you should have to mourn all your after-days,—bemoaning the heavens over you as brass, and no souls converted,—none of your friends awakened,—love waxed cold among the saints,—your own soul become like Pharaoh’s ears of corn, “thin, and withered, and blasted with the east wind.”

In order, therefore, to honour the Spirit, you must *know* his workings. “The world cannot receive him, because it *knoweth* him not,” John xiv. 17. And many believers give him little honour, because they know him not. O then, reader, come and see what He has wrought upon the earth!

Let us begin with his works as recorded in the Old Testament; and for the sake of distinctness, we shall divide this part of the history into *seven* periods.

*The FIRST Period is the Creation.*

The Holy Spirit, as one of the persons of the glorious Godhead, created the heavens and the earth. The sea, the sky, the earth, and even man himself were his work. He

removed the waters from the face of the solid earth, and gathered them into their beds. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. i. 3. He moved the vast unwieldy volume of the immense ocean, and put it in its place. Soon it became a calm expanse, like the sea of glass in an unfallen world, reposing in clear purity. And above this ocean, he adorned the sky;—"by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens," Job xxvi. 13. He put every planet and star in its orb and station, and upholds them there. He garnished the sky for man's sake. The beautiful clouds of sunset—"the spreadings and balancings of his clouds," Job xxxvi. 29; xxxvii. 16,—and the deep blue sky at noon, and these stars seen in the clear night, all were the work of the Spirit. And this earth was adorned by him. For even now this is his work;—"thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth," Psal. civ. 30. It is he who, even in our fallen world, brings verdure over the earth when winter is passed, drawing forth anew, in the season of spring, from the soil, all that is nourishing, and all that is pleasant to the eye of man. And by this specimen of his work on earth still, we may infer the glory of the unfallen creation, and what will be the restored glory of earth, when, by this same Spirit, "the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon," Isaiah xxxv. 2. He prepared man's dwelling,—the heavens over his head shining with unfallen glory,—the sea within his view reflecting the splendour of the sky, and itself full of wonders,—while the earth he trod upon scattered its wealth in profusion for his enjoyment. And when all things were thus ready, he created *man*;—"the Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life," Job xxxiii. 4.

1. Reader, were you ever despairing? Were you ever saying, that none cared for your troubled soul? Behold, the Holy Ghost, who has specially to do with the spirits of men! behold his love to man! The interest felt in man by the Spirit is not less than that felt by the Son and the Father.

2. Learn the beauty of holiness. For if the beauty of the unfallen creation in its *external* aspect, was so perfect, infinitely more excellent will be that wrought in the *inner* man. For the external beauty was in a manner only the bye-work of the Spirit; whereas, the adorning of the inner man is his peculiar operation. Judge by this, how beautiful and glorious he will make the soul that receives him.



3. What a mighty creating Spirit is he! How easily, then, he could renew you, reader, if you are still unconverted. Conversion is creation-work; Psalm li. 10, "*Create in me a clean heart;*" and here is he who can accomplish it. Or, are you troubled? The Spirit who brought order out of confusion,—making hills take their proper place, and seas move to their bed,—heaving at his pleasure the unwieldy mass of deep waters,—he it is who can bring you to rest. As he cleared the face of the sky, cleaving asunder the thick darkness, and shewing "the body of heaven in its clearness," so he can dispel your clouds, and shew you *the face of Jesus.*

### *The SECOND Period is the Fall.*

We are sure that the Holy Spirit felt the awful ruin of man. He is now "grieved," Ephes. iv. 30, at each individual sin. O then, how deep must have been his feeling when he saw the flood-gate of *all sin* opened! And as he had been the medium of communicating to unfallen man the love of the Godhead, so now it grieved him to withdraw.

But we find him not forsaking man. We find his regenerating and converting work made known the very day that Adam fell. In the promise that conveyed the glad tidings of the Redeemer, the work of the Holy Spirit was contained;—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed and her seed," Gen. iii. 15. In his "enmity" to Satan lies the whole principle of regeneration. So that, we have here a statement of conversion, and that too, in its connection with the work of Christ. By means of the work of Christ, the Spirit works in the fallen man, love to God, and enmity to the devil's seed.

1. Reader, observe that the doctrine of regeneration was taught in Eden. It is an old truth, and one so important, that it is found among the first principles of redemption.

2. There is need of the entrance of God, the Holy Ghost, to enable man to escape from Satan. Satan holds the sinner fast. Look at Satan's undisputed dominion—hell! See how awfully fast every soul is secured! None escape from it; they have chains that never break—fetters that never snap—and a hand grasps them that none can unclasp but the Holy Spirit!

3. The Holy Spirit, in delivering a soul, brings the soul



to side completely with Christ and his cause. "I will put enmity," &c. The man cannot any more hesitate about his choice. He becomes decided. Instead of a lingering love to the world, and Satan's tempting offers, his soul is in the state of "*enmity*" towards him.

### *The THIRD Period is the Flood.*

The Holy Spirit had often entered into souls, and saved them by pointing to a promised Saviour. And he had breathed on Enoch the spirit of prophecy, that fallen man might know more fully of a coming Saviour. The Holy Spirit preserved this record of his own love to men, by keeping the prophecy of Enoch in the memory of the fathers, and at last inserting it for our use in the epistle of Jude.

But as the wickedness of man increased, his love began to be more strikingly seen; just as the brightness of a beacon-light is most seen when darkness has covered the sky. It is well worthy of our notice, that at every new crisis he comes into full view. We shall see this verified in all the after periods of the history. And it proves to us, that he was all along pervading the ways of God to man.

We find the Holy Spirit before the flood, "*striving with men*," Gen. vi. 3. The Holy One strove even with the giants that were on the earth in those days, and with monsters of iniquity! He strove, and they resisted during 120 years. So unwearied—so patient was his love! And it was he who raised up and qualified Noah to preach salvation, and enabled him all that long period to persevere amidst the mockery of the whole earth! For 1 Peter iii. 19, tells us, that this same Holy Spirit, who afterwards shewed his love to man, by quickening Jesus, was in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, sent by Jesus to enable Noah to testify to that wicked generation, who are now "*spirits in prison*,"—cast into hell, because they would not hear the call.

The object of his "*striving with men*," was to lead them into the ark, that they might be saved. For he foresaw the terrors of the flood, and the more awful terrors of hell, into which the flood would sweep them. He heard, though it was yet distant, their cry of woe and despair,—the weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth in endless remorse. Therefore he strove with thousands that afterwards perished. He

strove with old men and little children, young men and maidens ; and yet they resisted him and perished.

1. Here is an awful *fact*; the Spirit *strives* with many whom He does not *convert*. How this should be so we are not told; for He could as easily overcome as strive. But the fact is beyond a doubt; and its very mystery makes it more tremendously impressive. If you read the Bible and are not converted, you resist the strivings of the Spirit; for, Heb. iii. 7, shews you that He speaks in every verse. And so, when you hear Christ preached, and are not moved, you are exactly as 1 Pet. iii. 19, represents the men before the flood. And Stephen, Acts vii. 51, declares that opposers of the truth are in the act of continual resistance to the Holy Ghost. How awful! A silent contest, spirit against spirit! the spirit of man against the Spirit of God.

2. Notice *the times* when He specially strives. We saw He did so under Noah's preaching, and so still. But His reason for special striving by very powerful ministers is, because a flood is coming on you. It may be an intimation of calamity near to our land, that He has raised up some to preach with special power throughout the land. At all events, the general fact is plain, that he strives specially before any calamity comes. Reader, perhaps before you are to be overtaken by some sore trouble or wasting sickness, or deadly disease, God is striving with your soul! That alarming passage which you last read may be sent to arouse you *now*, because the billows of a flood are almost wetting your feet.

3. Learn the object of all the Spirit's strivings and convictions. It is in his deep love to draw you into the ark. No doubt he enabled Noah to persuade with great earnestness, and to shew the place of safety—to describe the ark, and its security, impenetrable by water, proof against the dashing billows. Just so now he enables his ministers, in prospect of the fiery deluge—when the gates, instead of “the windows” of heaven, shall be wide opened to let the flood pour along—to urge sinners to flee. He it is that enables them, for your sake, reader, to set forth the full provision made for you in Christ—to tell you that there is an ark ready, if you will only *be pleased with it*, and go in—a Saviour ready, with whom the Father is well pleased, and with whom he wishes you to be satisfied, as he is himself. If you *believe* your danger, and that an *ark with an open door* is offered you, you will certainly enter in.

4. Ministers learn that their strength lies, like Noah's, in

being upheld by the Spirit. They are raised up by the Spirit to testify of Christ, the ark.

5. Behold the immensity of the Holy Spirit's love! He goes through thousands upon thousands! As at Pentecost he displayed his love by coming on some, from all kindreds and people, so here also.

*The FOURTH Period is the First Centuries after the Flood.*

Earth was peopled again, and the Spirit did not forsake the place where he had striven in vain. The confusion of tongues at Babel was undoubtedly his work, just as the gift of tongues at Jerusalem. The love of the Spirit is here seen, in as much as he thus took direct means to prevent man's pride, and broke up their company, and led them away one from another. He wished to stem the torrent of sin. And then he exhibited his marvellous power, by setting apart individuals, and keeping them safe amidst an apostate generation. He formed such a character as Abraham, full of faith—like a lofty pillar erect on a desolate heath. He gave Joseph his holiness and discretion, so that Pharaoh said, "The Spirit of God is in him," Gen. xli. 38. It is every way probable, also, that about this time *Job* was kept separate in a heathen land—a monument of the work of the Holy Spirit, in opposition to the "spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." In him "the enmity" between Satan and the woman's seed was eminently displayed. And Job knew the Spirit who preserved and sanctified him; for he speaks of his works in passages which we have already quoted.

1. Believers, learn from this the immense power of the Spirit. You see He can keep a spark alive amidst the ocean—Joseph in Egypt. There is immense power manifested in regeneration, and also in the preservation of the regenerated, as you find, Ephes. i. 19, "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Never despond. If you are tried by friends, or "by iniquity at your heels, compassing you about," Psalm xlix. 5, yet remember the power of the Holy Ghost. It will glorify him the more to keep you safe.

2. Sinner, you cannot excuse yourself by saying that you are hedged in by insuperable barriers, that your situation makes it impossible for you to obey God. It may be you are rich, or perhaps poor, and on that account tried with

the prospect of temporal ruin if you are to be on God's side. Therefore you say, "There is a lion in the way," Prov. xxii. 13. But the Holy Spirit is able to make you stand, and keep you from falling, and present you spotless. The root of your hesitation is a *willingness to find it impossible*—a desire to be able to say with apparent fairness, "I pray thee have me excused." If you doubt the Holy Spirit's power and willingness to keep you from falling, you make God a liar, and you love darkness rather than light.

*The FIFTH Period is, Israel in the Desert.*

In this period we find the Spirit manifesting himself in a threefold manner. The first was, his leading Israel through the great wilderness. When any great thing was to be done for man, we always find the Spirit come into view. Now, one great end to be accomplished by separating Israel from other nations was, the coming of the Redeemer—it was, therefore, a scheme that breathed love to the whole world. No wonder, then, that we find it written, "As a beast goeth down into the valley, so *the Spirit* of the Lord caused him to rest," Isaiah lxiii. 14. We find him directing and counselling the people, and turning the heart of enemies. When their desert-state was nearly ended he put into the lips of Balaam some of the sweetest words of comfort and blessing that Israel ever heard.

1. Providences are under the direction of the Holy Spirit. He turns the heart of men,—suggests, hinders, excites. A person that speaks to you on the road may be sent by Him. A person's change of plan or purpose may be His direct act. And thus he may answer many a prayer.

2. Ministers get words from the Spirit, like Balaam. And this is a most encouraging truth, when connected with the preceding. The ministrations prepared for you, Acts x. 19, and your being led by Him up to the temple, like Simeon, Luke i. 27, all will be arranged with divine wisdom for your salvation.

3. Your sphere in life has been directed by the Spirit. He *leads you in the desert*. He prevented people offering you a better situation—and He reconciles your mind to the place where you are—"causes you to rest."

But a second way wherein the Holy Spirit, at this period, manifested his love to man was, in the Tabernacle.



While in the desert, the tabernacle was set up, full of the types of Christ. And we read how the Holy Spirit filled Bezaleel, and Aholiab; "I have filled them with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship," Exod. xxxi. 3. The object of the skill so imparted was, to enable them accurately and faithfully to form the various vessels and furniture, which were all to typify the Redeemer. As no man can know Christ except by the Holy Spirit's teaching, so none could successfully execute the patterns of heavenly things except by his guidance. And therefore these two men, and as many besides as were engaged in the work, were filled for it by the Spirit; "in the heart of all the wise-hearted I have put wisdom," Exod. xxxi. 6. It was a day of Pentecost to the Old Testament church—"he gave gifts to men," that they might make known Christ. Learn from this,

1. The Spirit's deep concern in your salvation. He takes care to have the way pointed out clearly and accurately.

2. No one can come to a saving acquaintance with Christ without the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 14.

3. Ministers are taught that they cannot set forth Christ to their people without the direct teaching of the Spirit. Without him they may show *a* Christ, but not a full, living Saviour—some lineaments of his form will be wanting,—something of his beauty hid.

But there was a third way, during this period, whereby the Holy Spirit manifested himself. He gave a type of himself. He taught them to erect a *Laver* in the tabernacle, opposite the altar. This Laver was a type of the Holy One. It stood filled with pure, clear, crystal water; and when the sun shone upon it, it would attract the eye of every worshipper, and would resemble the stream, "clear as crystal, that proceedeth out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb," Rev. xxii. 1. Israel was thus taught how beautiful is holiness, and that all purity came from this full source, the Holy Spirit. Even after he had cleared away sin at the altar, he found himself requiring a purity that could be communicated only by God. The worshipper saw that being justified by the blood of atonement, he must forthwith look for sanctification from the Spirit. The work of Christ, and the work of the Spirit were held forth in equal clearness; and there was no possibility of passing into the Holy Place without approaching both *Altar* and *Laver*.



*The SIXTH Period is the time of the Judges.*

After Israel had reached the land of Promise, and set up their tabernacle there, they soon forgot the Lord. They turned their eye away from the glorious mass of types whereby they might have been kept ever looking to the coming Saviour. As a consequence of their sin, the enemy came in as a flood. Often there seemed no hope of deliverance—often it had come to the extremity, that the Tabernacle and the Ark—the type and pledge of a coming Redeemer—as well as the very people from whom Christ was to come were on the point of being swept away. Had this been permitted to take place, where would have been the hope of man?

But the love of the Spirit appeared now again. It was he who raised up judges and deliverers. "*The Spirit of the Lord* came upon Othniel, and he judged Israel and went out to war," Judges iii. 10. And so it is said of Gideon, "*The Spirit of the Lord* clothed Gideon," vi. 34; and of many others.

Reader, be excited by this, 1. To pray for the raising up of instruments for the work of the Lord. We need them in church and state, and he is willing to send them, and often does it suddenly. In your prayer-meetings ask this specially from the Holy Spirit; for it is written, "when the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise a standard against him," Isaiah lix. 19. And we might have noticed, in the desert-time, that Moses no sooner sought help, because unable to bear all the people, than lo! the Spirit came upon seventy of the elders, Numb. xi. 25. And, reader, 2. If you want *courage* to confess Christ before men, the Spirit is he who gives it. He gave it to Gideon, who before shrunk from all trial, and was threshing wheat in a retired, concealed spot, from fear of men. 3. If a day of trial is near, then our provision is in the Holy Spirit—"a Spirit of *power*,"—able to prepare Christ's weakest saints, even if they be called to endure tortures and martyrdom.

*The SEVENTH period is the time of the Kings.*

Though often grieved and vexed, the Holy Spirit, in his wondrous love, continued from time to time to raise up de-

liverers, until the days of *Saul*. Israel had sinned in seeking a king, yet when *Saul* had been appointed, "the Spirit of the Lord came on him," 1 Sam. xi. 6, and ix. 9, to give the heart for his office. It was, however, only a gift to be used for others, it was not *grace* to himself. And farther, in his days, Samuel the prophet presided over those schools of the prophets, where there was so much of the Holy Spirit, that many who mingled with these for a night became new men. 1 Sam. xix. 20, 21.

Memorable lessons were taught to the world at that time, viz. *Gifts* are not the same thing as *grace*. A minister may edify his people, and yet be, like *Saul*, just a rod in the Spirit's hand to smite the rock, or as an iron pipe through which pure refreshing water flows. In our days it is a warning much needed. Public zeal, and being a blessing to others, is not *grace* in itself. It may often be *Saul's* gift. On the other hand, the schools of the prophets exhibited a work of the Spirit in reality, and they were the salt of the land. The *gifts* and the *graces* of the Spirit were displayed separately, perhaps on purpose to shew how certain it is that they are not the same.

But soon after *both* were united in the person of *David*, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. During many years he was tried in the furnace, and all that time the Spirit was sanctifying the man for his future work. He was deepening his holiness, that it might be unshaken amidst the honour of a kingdom. Having finished his preparatory work on *David*, he raised him to the throne, and suggested to his mind many schemes for the advancement of the glory of God. The *ark* was brought to mount Zion with great honour and triumph, and so *Christ* in type was thus brought eminently into view of all Israel. And then the book of Psalms was dictated to *David* by the same Spirit, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; a book where the name of *Christ* is as ointment poured forth, in his sufferings and in his glory.

The same was repeated, but in a higher degree, in the days of *Solomon*. The Holy Spirit suggested the plan of the magnificent temple, 1 Chron. xxviii. 19, which being at last completed, the Saviour in type was exhibited thereby in a glory never known before. The splendour was such that all ends of the earth came to see it. All this was the work of the Spirit, "the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit," 1 Chron. xxviii. 12; he was taking the things of *Christ*, and shewing them to the world. No doubt many souls that came, attracted by the splendour of the temple, learnt the way of

salvation, and returned home glorifying God. *The Song of Songs*, written at the same time, set forth the glory of the Redeemer, as the book of Psalms had done. And we find, as a consequence of all this, that both in the days of David and of Solomon, there was a most extensive revival of true religion. These were times of refreshing. Indeed, there were never in Israel such happy times as when Solomon's temple was finished; as if to show the endless streams of joy that flow from a fully set forth Saviour.

Learn here, 1. That a revival proceeds from the love and power of the Holy Spirit. He raises up instruments and gives the blessing. If a minister come among a people, and be blessed to him, it was the Spirit who sent him, and clothed him with power; and the people who would keep what they obtain must acknowledge his love.

2. The Spirit revives and quickens souls, whether individually or on a large scale, by bringing Christ fully into view. At the time when, in behalf of the whole nation, he was setting forth Christ in the magnificent temple, he was also carrying in the same truth to private dwellings, and making it permanent there by means of the Psalms and Song of Songs.

O reader, this wondrous Spirit shewed in detail at that time many of his peculiar acts. He taught David that he alone is the author of *conversion*, "Create in me a clean heart,"—and of continuing *holiness*, "Uphold me by thy free Spirit," Psal. li. 10, 12,—and of all discoveries of God, "Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness," Psal. cxliii. 10. And, O reader, he shewed that he is traversing the earth seeking souls, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit," Psal. cxxxix, and that he will come and reside in souls that turn their eyes to the glorious Saviour, "Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour my Spirit into you," Prov. i. 23.

During the reign of the other kings of Judah, many books of Scripture were written for all ages; each a gift of the Holy Ghost to the children of men. And the nearer the prophets lived to the day of Christ's actual coming in the flesh, more and more of the Spirit was revealed. The more fully Christ is revealed and glorified, then the more of the Spirit; this is a principle that pervades the whole ways of God. In the prophets he is always spoken of in connection with Christ's work. Isaiah was told that in future days, he would rest on Jesus, to furnish him for his work; and three times is this truth declared, see chap. xi. 1-3,

chap. xlii. 1. and lxi. 1—3; and see in this fact his desire to fix our eye on the infinitely perfect work of Jesus! His desire is to lead you, sinner, to rest there. When Christ did come, there was no spot on earth's surface whereon the Spirit would rest but the *person of Jesus*. He passed by the rich fields,—the mines of gold,—the wealthy cities,—the ceiled palaces, and repaired to the desert, that he might rest and abide on Jesus! And so we find, while Christ's coming was still only foretold, he looked through the future scenes of earth, and no one seems to attract attention except the work of the Saviour and its effects. When the men of Israel lost sight of the hope of their fathers, seventy years' captivity ensued, and the Holy Spirit revealed to Ezekiel and Zechariah that he would be the author of their deliverance, by turning them to the Redeemer, and then dwelling in them. The remedy for Israel's still-continued desolation will be, the Spirit directing their eye to Jesus,—“I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they pierced,” Zech. xii. 10. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, from all your idols will I cleanse you,”—(this is the Saviour's work applied, the hyssop passing through the conscience; and then,) “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you,” Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

Thus, reader, the love and office and power of the Spirit were sounded in the full voice of prophecy over ages and generations; and they have reached you. Behold! he strives to find entrance into that soul of yours. Will you resist the Holy Ghost? or is he to come in and say of your soul,

“This is my rest, here will I stay,  
“For I do like it well?”

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(SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.)



## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

TO FATHERS, TO YOUNG MEN, AND TO LITTLE CHILDREN.

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*"These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."*—Chap. i. 1.

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THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say



that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him:\*. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the

\* i. e. There is nothing which can cause him to stumble or fall, for by walking in love he walks in light, and therefore sees his way.

things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.\* I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

\* *i. e.* The anointing of the Holy Ghost,—so Christ had told them that the Comforter was to “teach them all things,” John xiv. 26.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law : for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins ; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him ? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren : he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us : and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man



hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this



is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

## HYMN. 1 JOHN iii. 2, 3.

What must it be to dwell above,  
At God's right hand where Jesus reigns,  
Since the sweet earnest of his love  
O'erwhelms us on these dreary plains!  
No heart can think, no tongue explain  
What bliss it is with Christ to reign.

When sin no more obstructs our sight,  
 When sorrow pains our hearts no more,  
 How shall we view the Prince of light,  
 And all his works of grace explore !  
 What heights and depth of love divine  
 Will there through endless ages shine !

This is the heaven I long to know ;  
 For this with patience I would wait,  
 Till, wean'd from earth and all below,  
 I mount to my celestial seat ;  
 And wave my palm, and wear my crown,  
 And with the elders cast them down.

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(SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.)

## THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

## PART II.

## AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"There were seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne; which are the seven spirits of God . . . sent forth into all the earth." REV. IV. 5.; v. 6.

READER, do you often consider *your* special privilege, and responsibility *now*, when there is more of the Spirit within reach of fallen man than before Christ's coming? The fact is stated in John vii. 39, and the reason of it also.

The Spirit would not have breathed at all upon fallen man, unless atonement had been offered for sin. The love of the Holy Spirit is holy love; it waits for a holy channel through which to flow. Such a channel was opened by the promise of a Redeemer in Eden, and the Spirit forthwith began his work of regenerating man. Abel, Enoch, Melchizedec, Abraham, and thousands more, were renewed and sanctified by him, long ere Jesus had died. But all was done *on the understanding* that Jesus was yet to die; the sins of those whom he sanctified were *reckoned* as suffered for, and the Lamb was *reckoned* slain from the beginning of the world. Still, in order to keep the world in mind that the righteous God would never give up his demand for entire satisfaction; there was *only a part of the Spirit's fulness* given out, previous to the time when Christ actually came and paid the full ransom. The anxious world was kept waiting for the joyful cry, "It is finished!" "Because Jesus was not glorified, *the Holy Spirit was not yet given.*" When we see only the hands and feet of a man, we do not say we have seen the man; for we have not seen his face and form; so, says the Evangelist, a right idea of what the *Spirit* is, was not yet given to man. But, as the time drew on to Christ's actual death, more was given; and when the Saviour's work was declared to be accepted in his ascension, the streams of the full Spirit poured down upon the earth. Like the seven streams of the river of Egypt, this copious flood came down; the one infinite Spirit emptying himself on the earth in seven streams, Rev. i. 4. Let us, then, draw your attention, reader, to some of the wonderful things recorded of him, as he came forth in this fuller manifestation.

I. *His wonderful work on the soul of John the Baptist.*  
He entered the soul of the forerunner of the Lord, while

yet an infant in the womb. John was thus sanctified from the womb; and the evidence of the Spirit's work appeared in him even then, in as much as a distinct intimation of the Saviour's coming made the babe leap for joy.

*Little children*, see how the Holy Spirit loves you. Look at John the Baptist, and you can no more say it is too soon for the Spirit to love you, and too soon for you to need him. Look at John and tell us, why *you* too should not be holy now? Look at this infant boy, filled with the Spirit, and tell us why you have not got him yet? Did you ever know that on the day that you were baptized, he offered to come to you? Will *you* resist the Holy Ghost?

*Parents*, the Holy Spirit can sanctify souls in the womb; why are your children not thus sanctified? Some of you complain of your children's temper and conduct; but have you asked for them the Spirit, offered in baptism? And have you taught your children that he did offer himself to them? O for your own soul's sake, care for your children! Many pious parents are punished in the barrenness of their own souls for the carelessness of their families. Holiness in your seed would come back on yourselves. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, when the babe leapt for joy at Mary's voice,<sup>1</sup> and Zechariah was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied," when he recognised the work of God in his infant son.<sup>2</sup>

## II. *His wonderful work in the birth of Christ.*

Gabriel was sent to tell Mary that Immanuel was to be born of her. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee."<sup>3</sup> Mary's sinful nature was by him sanctified that she might be a habitation for "the child that was to be born to us." When Christ shall come to set up his throne on earth, earth shall be fully purified; so, when Mary was to receive the heir of that throne, she was fully prepared, and the child born of her was "the holy child Jesus," without spot or wrinkle of sin.<sup>4</sup> What a moment was that wherein the Word became flesh! Reader, here is the "mystery of godliness!" The Spirit who at creation fashioned the unfallen earth and sky, prepared in that hour the human nature of Christ. The Father gives the word, and the Son responds to the Father, as he saw the Holy Spirit complete his work, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God—a body hast thou prepared me!"<sup>5</sup> and forthwith *He* is on earth, in our nature, who was to be our sacrifice!

Learn here, 1. *The sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit.* His sovereignty is the same as that of the Father; he comes in free grace to whom he will. He is doing for man what he never did for fallen angels; he is giving

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iv. 30.

Hebrews x. 5.

his own nature to fallen man! O reader, may you be one of the vessels of mercy whom he fills!

2. *The Holy Spirit's anxiety that a complete Saviour should be provided for man.* It was on this account he so prepared the person of Immanuel. The sacrifice chosen for us, was one that from the first was spotless, and therefore sure to be accepted whenever it should be offered. And when our great sacrifice was shewn in the temple soon after he came, the gracious Spirit led Simeon to behold him, and filled his soul with peace.<sup>1</sup>

### III. *His work during Christ's thirty years' retirement.*

He continued to dwell in Christ's human nature, like the glory filling Solomon's temple. He daily breathed more and more wisdom into Christ's human soul, and brought out more and more grace into manifestation; rays of the indwelling glory were made from time to time to stream forth upon the surrounding darkness. "He increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man."<sup>2</sup> All this, too, while Nazareth was his place of abode. During nearly thirty years, Jesus lived in Nazareth, a city noted for its wickedness; the Holy Spirit carried on the holiest work ever seen on earth in the midst of the vilest city. The contrast made the work more evident and marvellous. How powerful the holiness of God! O reader, Christ's *salvation is a holy salvation*; in his person, the Spirit shews you the possibility of being holy even in the midst of an evil world, "godly in *this present world*."<sup>3</sup> The Holy One of God emerges from polluted Nazareth. Are your neighbours evil? Are your friends ungodly? Are your parents enemies of God? Yet behold the Spirit's work in Nazareth, and be of good cheer.

### IV. *His work at the baptism of Christ.*

He came then specially to give his human nature all gifts for his office, and Isaiah's prophecy (lxi. 1.) was then fulfilled to the very eye of man. Anxious that nothing should be left undone for us, he so anointed Jesus that "he returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee."<sup>4</sup> Jordan, when it overflowed all its banks, would be but a feeble type of the abundance of the Spirit poured that day on Jesus; for he was poured out on him without measure.<sup>5</sup>

But notice, reader, that the Spirit did this in a way that shewed his own intense desire for your salvation. Heaven opened—there was brightness above the brightness of the midday sun, and, while every eye was fixed on "the body of the heavens in its clearness," the Holy Ghost came down from the Father and rested on Jesus, "in a bodily form, like

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 27. "led by the Spirit."

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Titus ii. 12. <sup>4</sup> Luke iv. 14.

<sup>5</sup> John iii. 34.



a dove." He did the nearest thing to becoming visible; for he caused his presence to be marked by a "bodily form, like a dove." As at Pentecost tongues of fire rested on the disciples, so a bright form, like a dove, rested on Jesus as he stood in the streams of Jordan!

We see here, 1st, *The Holy Spirit glorifying Christ in the sight of sinners.* He points him out to the notice of a careless world. He recommends him to you by bringing attractive glory round him. Oh he longs to draw your attention to Jesus that you may be forced to cry, "there is beauty in him that I should desire him."

2d. *We see the Spirit teaching anxious souls that it is Christ who brings peace to the sinner.* For he chose the form of a dove when he abode on Jesus, and so brought into view the feelings of God toward the world when the deluge was past. Noah's dove was the messenger of peace, bringing good tidings that the flood of wrath was assuaged. And so on Jordan's waters, the Spirit points to Jesus, "who is our peace"—his olive-branch is the plant of renown.

And 3d. *We see the Spirit teaching us that Christ brings in a new creation.* He had never come in such visible energy since the day when he "moved on the face of the deep." But now he does so again, because the Creator is here, and a new creation begun.

#### V. *His work during Christ's public ministry.*

As soon as he had publicly anointed the Saviour and furnished him fully, he led him to be tempted forty days of the devil.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit thus shewed his own power, for he kept the slightest breath of evil from entering him whom he upheld, although every form of sin, in every pleasant disguise, was successively presented. But his special intention in this case was to let us see that our Ark was well able to withstand the storm, that it was waterproof and indestructible. He was anxious that we should know this truth, and therein possess strong consolation; anxious, too, that by Christ's example we might learn how to overcome when tempted; and anxious that we might see sympathy ready for us in our Redeemer's breast, "in that he himself was tempted."<sup>2</sup>

When our Redeemer was performing his miracles, he declared that he acted by "the Spirit of God."<sup>3</sup> He said this when casting out devils, thereby teaching us that the Holy Spirit is Satan's grand opposer, and takes his place in the heart that Christ has cleansed. And when you see also how being "full of the same Spirit," Jesus raised the dead and healed diseases, remember that it may be through the direct operation of that Spirit "who made you," (Job

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 1. Matt. iv. 1.    <sup>2</sup> Hebrews ii. 18.    <sup>3</sup> Matt. xii. 28.

xxxiii. 4.) that health is breathed through your frame, and refreshing sleep made to restore your wearied body.

But never were the Spirit's power and love to man more manifest than at Christ's death. It was "by the eternal Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> that he offered himself to God without spot. The sacrifice was all put in order by him, so that obedience, love, intense desire for the Father's glory, and yearning over sinners, were felt in their highest degrees in the soul of Jesus at that awful moment. And all was completed when for our sakes the Spirit caused the communications of love towards the beloved Son to run so low, that he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" And in the same anxiety of love, how fully did he shew himself in Jesus at the resurrection-morning—"the Spirit of holiness" raising him from the grave and declaring him the Son of God with power.<sup>2</sup> And ever since that hour he has delighted to give power to the witness borne of the finished work of the Redeemer;<sup>3</sup> because therein a sinner finds all that is needed for his pardon and peace.

#### VI. *Christ's Discourses, and Promises concerning Him.*

We have seen the Spirit's operation in the various scenes of Christ's life-time here; let us see also what Christ himself used to tell of him to his disciples.

When he first began to teach, he pointed to the Spirit—"the Spirit of the Lord is upon me."<sup>4</sup> And the first of his recorded conversations is that with Nicodemus, wherein he explained how no man can enter the kingdom of heaven till he is born of that Spirit who was typified by the pure water under the Old Testament dispensation. Reader, Christ has seen all the souls that ever entered heaven, and he declares that not one has entered who had not first been born again. He puts his seal to his truth, "Verily, Verily,"<sup>5</sup> three times in the course of that one conversation, and declares with awful solemnity, "We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen!" Reader, has the Spirit come to you? Are you new-born? Has he ever come to you, like "fire," to burn up the stubble?<sup>6</sup> or as "the rain" softly entering your soul, while you read the Scriptures? or as a "quick two-edged sword," piercing you with deep convictions? and then descending as a dove, has he shewn you peace after your many alarms? The time and manner of his coming it would be interesting to know; but this can be wanted; the all-important question is, *Has he come?*

During his ministry, Christ often spoke of him as the

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews ix. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Romans i. 4. Ephes. i. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 31, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Luke iv. 14, 18.

<sup>5</sup> John iii. 3, 5, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah iv. 4.

great gift he would bestow on his children.<sup>1</sup> Often he warned those around him of blaspheming him. On one of the most remarkable days of his ministry—the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, he held forth this gift as the grand effect of believing on the Saviour.<sup>2</sup> But when the time drew near that he must leave the world, he spake of Him more and more. How full of him are his discourses in John xiv. xv. xvi. He taught his disciples to lean on the Spirit as their guide into all truth; and told them that in doing so he would convince them of sin, fixing the sinner's gaze especially on the sin of rejecting his Saviour—next, would convince them of righteousness, satisfying them that it was to be found in the Redeemer, because, after wearing the garment, he had gone and shewn it to the Father—and finally, convince them of this, that judgment was given against Satan, the Prince of this world, and that his cause was ruined, the head of the Serpent being crushed. He further told them that his office would specially be to take up the things that concerned the Saviour and shew them to souls; so that doubting, dark, anxious minds might at once be relieved, when no minister or guide on earth could help them (see 1 Cor. ii. 12.) Already he had taught them that all their usefulness would depend on the measures they received of this Spirit; “out of him shall flow rivers of living water,” and they found it so in their after experience. (See Acts iv. 31, 33, and the account of Pentecost.) On the very day he left them, when just about to ascend, he said, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father.”<sup>3</sup>

Reader, observe, 1. How in all our Lord's ministry he led his disciples to the Spirit, even as the Spirit leads all souls to Christ—the Spirit leads all coming sinners to the *Altar*; and when there they have met Jesus, Jesus sends them to the *Laver*. 2. The best gift that our ascended king could select for his beloved disciples, out of all the riches of heaven, and all its joys, was the gift of the Holy Ghost. Does it seem small in your eyes? 3. Put together all that Jesus said of this gift, and can you forbear to covet it? Reader, if you are a believer you have access to large supplies of this Spirit. For Luke xi. 13. declares the Father's heart toward you, and John xvi. 7. gives you a resistless plea—“If I depart, I will send him!” Say then, “*he has departed*—we are waiting for our Head, for he is in the heavens—therefore Lord, send the Comforter!” If you have not large supplies of the Spirit, it is as much your guilt as it was in the case of any weary and thirsty Israelite who, though he walked beside the stream from the

<sup>1</sup> Luke xi. 13.    <sup>2</sup> John vii. 39.    <sup>3</sup> Luke xxiv. 49.    Acts i. 8.

smitten rock, yet drank only sparingly, because he was reluctant to stoop down.

VII. *His work—his full outpouring after Christ's death.*

We have seen why he was not fully poured out till Christ was glorified. But in his ascension, Christ was fully glorified; his person being the sacrifice once offered; and that sacrifice during forty days after the resurrection, shone upon by the Father's glory, as its resplendent seal; and thereafter presented in heaven. There was now no hindrance to the Spirit's full outpouring; He therefore prepared to come down. Ten days he kept the disciples at Jerusalem waiting, that they might be the more thirsty, and welcome his coming the more. Meanwhile he brought all his fulness to the person of the now glorified Immanuel, and made him the fountain out of which the living waters were to flow. The *Laver* in the heavenly temple was thus placed beside the *Altar*—so that behold, sinner, you cannot be sanctified otherwise than by approaching the Saviour! This fulfilled that ancient prophecy, "thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and *received gifts for men.*"<sup>1</sup> And in the visions which have been granted to the Church, the full Spirit resting on and abiding in the person of Immanuel has ever attracted the notice of those who saw them; John saw the seven spirits in Christ's hand,<sup>2</sup> and at another time he saw the Lamb "with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth to all the earth."<sup>3</sup> And since that day, it has been usual to speak of the *Holy Spirit* in his relation to the Church as "*the seven spirits;*"<sup>4</sup> because he is poured forth from Jesus in *fulness*, of which a *sevenfold measure* was the symbol.

Our ascended High Priest had no sooner got the oil thus poured on his head, than it ran off even to the skirts of his garments—as typified in Aaron. Can you number the drops of dew? or the copious rain? or the drops of the sea? as little can any tell the dew, the rain, the living water, that has come down from him. He began at Pentecost to refresh his heritage; ever since, he has from time to time repeated such showers; and he meditates a shower more abundant still, when he will empty out the blessing promised by Joel,<sup>4</sup> the first drops of which fell in the days of Peter, and the rest of which is to be sent in "*the times of refreshing.*"<sup>5</sup>

*The day of Pentecost* taught that the gift of the Spirit is entirely in the hands of the Redeemer. None can be holy before coming to Christ; none can get the Spirit except out of his hands. It taught the world, the Spirit's desire to save sinners of every kindred and people. This was his object in

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxviii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. v. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Joel ii. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Acts iii. 19.



bestowing the gift of tongues, and in doing it when men were present from every nation under heaven. The day of Pentecost teaches us, why there are few conversions amongst us. It is the fault both of ministers and people—there is little of the Holy Ghost amongst us. There is little of such preaching as that described by Peter, when he speaks of men, who had preached *the Gospel with the Holy Ghost* sent down from heaven<sup>1</sup>—and there is little of such prayer as Jude recommends, “praying in the Holy Ghost.” But the day of Pentecost has taught us to pray, and expect reviving showers. Reader, if Christ has the Spirit in his hand,<sup>2</sup> will you not look often up to him, and cry “open thine hand, and satisfy the wants of living souls!”

It was after this, that a *regular ministry* began. There never had been such before. The Spirit used in former times to raise up instruments on particular occasions; but now he was more fully given, and in his great love instituted a standing ministry. This is recorded as his work on Christ’s ascension;<sup>3</sup> and ministers are called, “ministers of the Spirit;”<sup>4</sup> and their office, “the ministration of the Spirit;” and for their encouragement they are told that “the seven stars” are held in the same hand that holds the seven spirits. How full of gratitude ought you to be, reader, if you ever have been blessed in the house of God. All the profit, or joy, you ever found under the ministry of any one, is a result of the *Spirit’s* work when he established this order of men. If ever you got light, or had conviction of sin, or were made joyful under the preaching of the word, it is all to the glory of the Spirit’s love. Well may ministers themselves stand and adore. Their office is but the channel through which the living waters flow!

#### VIII. *His great gift, the Holy Scriptures.*

There are some particular instances of his power which we have omitted, such as that day when 5000 souls were saved;<sup>5</sup> and that other when he first shewed such patient kindness in leading the Ethiopian to the truth, and then such mighty energy in having caught away Philip.<sup>6</sup>

But now it was that he completed a revelation of the will of God to man. Long ere now he began to do this; but he never finished his work until the clear, full, completed work of Jesus was recorded. It was He who wrote the Old Testament, using the prophets as his instruments,<sup>7</sup> and so entirely guiding and inspiring the record that every thing and every word therein, small and great, has his authority.<sup>8</sup> From the day when the book of Genesis was written, he was continually selecting events to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter i. 12.    <sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 1.    <sup>3</sup> Eph. iv. 11.    <sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Acts iv. 4.    <sup>6</sup> Acts viii. 39.    <sup>7</sup> 2 Peter i. 21.    <sup>8</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.



be recorded, and matter for the use of the church. But he left the volume unfinished until all Christ's work was finished, and then he used apostles to write his will for coming ages; the whole word of God is now our perfect manual for all knowledge relative to the kingdom of God. And he has thus given us a full river along whose banks we may walk.<sup>1</sup> Reader, remember he uses this word as his instrument for conversion and sanctification. Let John xvii. 17. never be a day out of your memory; "*sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth.*" Formerly, he converted and sanctified souls, by leading them to see Christ in the types of the temple; but now you are "to grow in grace" by growing "in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

IX. *His daily work in the saints below.*

Here we shall merely point out the leading operations of the Spirit on the believer. He dwells in him and shall never leave him.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes he is made to retire, by a believer's backsliding, into the deepest recess, and is scarcely seen; yet he never leaves a dwelling he has once come to possess. In the case of *Samson*, you see him in the solitary dungeon of Gaza, coming forth from his retirement and raising in that man's heart the cry, "O Lord God, remember me"<sup>4</sup> In David's case, though retired far within for a year's space, at length he put forth his power, and the prayer was heard, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me!"<sup>5</sup>

Thus dwelling in his saints he calls them *his temple*;<sup>6</sup> even their bodies are reckoned his temple; and he says of their souls, "I will dwell in them and will walk in them."<sup>7</sup> He it is that makes the walls of this temple strong,<sup>8</sup> and then fills it with Himself.<sup>9</sup> He cleanses it, as Christ cleansed the temple from buyers and sellers; "ye mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit."<sup>10</sup> Upon the walls of this temple he pictures the glories of heaven, and causes clear manifestations of truth to shine—as in old times, palms, and flowers, and cherubims adorned the temple-walls to regale the sight of the worshipper. He is the "seven lamps" mentioned in Rev. iv. 5., shewing the heaven of heavens just as the seven-branched candlestick gave light and shewed the priest his way into the holy place, and let him see what was there. Above all he keeps the Altar conspicuous in their view, "glorifying" Christ,<sup>11</sup>—and giving "wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."<sup>12</sup> Everything here is regulated according to the law of the Holy God; every one in this temple exhibits, "meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, patience, tem-

<sup>1</sup> Psalm i. 2. <sup>2</sup> 2 Peter. iii. 18. <sup>3</sup> John xiv. 16. <sup>4</sup> Judges xvi. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm li. 11. <sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19. <sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 16. <sup>8</sup> Eph. iii. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Eph. v. 18. <sup>10</sup> Romans viii. 13. <sup>11</sup> John xvi. 14. <sup>12</sup> Colos. i. 9.

perance.”<sup>1</sup> And as an “earnest of the inheritance,” Ephes. i. 14. first-fruits are brought into this temple, and they are such as these, “Love, joy, peace.”<sup>2</sup> And joy expresses itself in songs, “in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.”<sup>3</sup>—such as were heard at Pentecost when they eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God,” and such as the prophet Isaiah foretold Christ was to give, when the anointing Spirit sent him to put on “the garment of praise.”<sup>4</sup> If enemies assail or storms beat upon the walls, then especially are these songs heard, and joy felt; they endure all “in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,” and are “filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>5</sup> yet many many are the cries and groans<sup>6</sup> that are heard from this temple; but they are groanings after more holiness. Sometimes, it is a cry for deliverance from the body of sin;<sup>7</sup> sometimes a cry for wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Christ;<sup>8</sup> sometimes for *faith*<sup>9</sup> or love or perseverance in retaining the truth to the end.<sup>10</sup> Incense is kept continually burning on the golden Altar in his temple, and the Spirit is he who keeps it burning, “the Spirit himself, raiseth the intercession within us.” Christ’s voice is heard in this temple through the Spirit. “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Reader, remember this each Sabbath morning as you go up to the house of God. Has he come to make you such a temple? Are his groans and cries ever heard within you?

X. *His work on the saints at death, and onward to the second coming of Christ.*

The interests of Christ and the Holy Spirit are all one. The saints are therefore alike precious to him as to the Redeemer. As soon as the hour of a believer’s departure from the body arrives, he makes him perfect in holiness. Then the saint commits his soul to his Redeemer, and dies! Immediately Father, Son, and Spirit express one feeling of delight. The Son presents the believer arrayed in righteousness to the Father; the Father seals his well-pleasedness, saying, “Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord*,” that is, in Jesus; and the Holy Spirit catches up the word, “From henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”<sup>11</sup> He rejoices to make perfect their holiness; and yet they go before the throne, *without their works*, in order that their justification may be seen to depend wholly on Christ. Yet at the same time he promises to be a witness

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 22.<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 22.<sup>3</sup> Colos. iii. 16.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah lxi. 3.<sup>5</sup> Acts ix. 31. and xiii. 52.<sup>6</sup> Rom. viii. 26.<sup>7</sup> Rom. viii. 23.<sup>8</sup> Isa. xi. 2. Eph. i. 17.<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 13<sup>10</sup> 2 Tim. i. 7. 14.<sup>11</sup> Rev. xiv. 13.

of their labours, their holy thoughts, words, sufferings, at the great day of recompense.

Forthwith, therefore, he begins to breathe into them stronger desires than they ever had before for the coming of Christ. For the comfort of friends left behind, he tells us some of the thoughts of departed saints. And this is the chief, viz. intense delight in Jesus still, and the wish to see him more glorified in their own sight, and in sight of all the world. Christ's Bride, that is, his Church above, is stirred up by the Spirit to invite Christ to come speedily. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;"<sup>1</sup> these holy souls that form the redeemed church above, are not complete till they get their resurrection-bodies; nor will they be fully satisfied till they get "the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> The Spirit, therefore, in his love to them and desire for their full enjoyment, helps them to urge on the day of the Redeemer's second coming. He had done this while on earth; "*we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit*, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."<sup>3</sup> And now since they have reached heaven, he enlarges their capacities and stirs up the same cry more and more.

Reader, this is the last view given us of the Spirit in the word of God. And it shows the position in which every saint should be standing. It shows us that the church above is ever crying to Jesus, "Come, Lord," and that the church below should do the same. "Let him that heareth say, come!" But there is a word for the sinner too. The church below, "he that heareth," has another duty besides seeking their own bliss and perfection by inviting Jesus to come quickly. They must also stand, and looking on the unconverted world, must cry, "He that is athirst let him come." We are to stand, with our eye upward on Jesus, with our hand stretched out to you, bidding you *come quickly to that Saviour* whom we are entreating to *come quickly to us*. The Spirit who knows your secret thoughts, and is ready to bear witness against you at the great day;—he, he it is who stirs us up to cry to you most earnestly now, "O sinner, come and take the water of life freely." He places you within sight of the judgment-seat, and then cries, "Come, and take." He shews you the fountain full to the very brim, and thereby would provoke your thirst, while he cries, "Come and take the water of life." He takes away the possibility of your saying that he does not address you, for he cries, "Whosoever is athirst;" and you are surely thirsty for joy and rest.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxii. 17.<sup>2</sup> Peter i. 13.<sup>3</sup> Romans viii. 23.

He would make it impossible for you to invent any excuse even for hesitation, and therefore he cries, "Whosoever will." And lest any shadow of excuse should remain, he makes the word "Freely, freely," be the word that dies upon your ear. He takes up the testimony of the Old Testament prophets,<sup>1</sup> and unites it to that of the Saviour uttered on earth,<sup>2</sup> and from heaven,<sup>3</sup> and thus he entreats you, to take and live for ever, as if he were holding the living water in one of the golden urns of his heavenly temple to your very lips; he cries, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." O reader, were you ever nearer bliss than now?

Meanwhile the church continues longing for the day of their Master's glory. The Spirit joins his cry to theirs, his voice to theirs, asking Jesus to "come quickly." For on that day when Christ is fully glorified with his own and his Father's glory, then shall his people receive of the Spirit in ample measures. The Spirit shall flow forth in immeasurable streams on every saint, "and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."<sup>4</sup> What understandings of God shall we have then. What attainments in holiness! How deep our love! How loud our praise! while in fellowship with all saints, we comprehend what is the height and depth, and length and breadth, and know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, and are filled with all the fulness of God! O then, let him that heareth join the Spirit and the bride crying, "Come, Lord Jesus."

And now, reader, we leave you, gathering up all we have said into a prayer, which, after what you have read will not seem unmeaning or unimportant. It is that which your minister breathes over you every Sabbath as you leave the house of God—"The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you. Amen."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lv 1.<sup>2</sup> John vii. 37.<sup>3</sup> Rev. ii. 6.<sup>4</sup> Habakkuk ii. 14.<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 14.



## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"—1 COR. x. 16.

"Take, eat; this is my body. . . . Drink ye all of it."—MATT. xxvi. 26, 27.

"The king hath brought me into his chamber; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine."—SONG OF SOLOMON, i. 4.

"Let a man examine himself. . . . If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,"—1 COR. xi. 28, 31.

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THE LORD'S table is spread for the Lord's people, *and for them alone*. No one ought to go to that table who is not a real follower of the Lamb. It is a feast for the disciples, and for them alone. It is bread for the children; it is pasture for the flock of Christ. All who go to that table in an unconverted state, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> We must first come to Christ before we can come to his feast. For He has prepared his feast for his saints alone,—for those whom he calls *his sister, his spouse, his bride, his love, his dove, his undefiled*.<sup>2</sup> These are welcome; all others are forbidden.

I. *The Lord's supper is a memorial of Christ*.<sup>3</sup> It is a memorial of the Man of Sorrows. It is a memorial of Him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, upon whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and by whose stripes we are healed. It is a memorial of the crucified One. It is a monument of bleeding, dying love. It proclaims the Lamb that was slain. It sets before us his bruised broken body,—his shed and sprinkled blood,—his face marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. Its simple common elements speak of Him who was meek and lowly, as well

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.      <sup>2</sup> Song v. 2.      <sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 19.



as of Him who poured out his soul unto death. In all its parts it speaks of Jesus,—of Jesus alone,—of none but Jesus,—Immanuel, God with us,—Messiah the anointed One,—the Beloved of the Father's soul! It reminds us of his incarnation,—his life,—his humiliation,—his agony,—his cross,—his death,—his grave. It takes us back to the upper chamber in Jerusalem,—to the passover table,—to Kedron,—to Gethsemane,—to Gabbatha,—to Pilate's hall,—to Calvary,—to Joseph's tomb. It brings to mind the gracious words of Him who spake as never man spake, and into whose lips grace divine was poured.<sup>1</sup> It says to us, Behold your king,—behold the man,—behold the Lamb of God,—behold my servant the Branch! It brings to mind the mighty deeds of him who did all things well. It tells us of the grace of Him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. It calls especially to mind the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem,—the glorious work whereby he finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, and made reconciliation for iniquity.<sup>2</sup> The voice that proclaimed from the cross "It is finished," still proclaims the same from the communion table by the bread and wine. These symbols tell us that the way to God is open now, and the access free,—that the blood has been shed,—the sacrifice offered up and accepted,—the veil rent,—and liberty secured, even for the guiltiest to draw near with perfect confidence to God. They preach the gospel, the glad tidings of great joy which are to us and to all people. All that Jesus did for us is represented in them. All the blessings of the new covenant are set forth to us. That table tells us of a full Saviour and a full salvation; a full Redeemer and a full redemption. A full Saviour, a free gospel, and a finished righteousness, are set before our eyes. There, truly, Jesus is "all in all." No name is heard but that of Jesus. The symbols speak of Jesus. The service breathes of Jesus. The praise is all of Jesus. The words are all of Jesus. And it seems as if the still voice of Jesus himself were heard in the silence of that solemn scene. Truly the Lord's supper is the memorial of Jesus.

II. *The Lord's supper is a SEAL of the blessings of Christ.* It seals these to us. It puts them into our hands,

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 22. Jo. vii. 46. Ps. xlv. 2

<sup>2</sup> Dan. ix. 24.

and says to each of us, all these are thine. In it Christ says to the soul, I am thine,—all my blessings are thine, all that I have is thine. He takes the bread and wine; he gives them to us, saying, Here is my royal seal;—take it, handle it, taste it, and doubt no more. Blessed pledges! Can I ever doubt again! I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. The supper is, (1.) A seal of pardon. (2.) A seal of adoption. (3.) Of eternal life. (4.) Of union with Christ and with the saints who are his body. (5.) Of his love to us; and our receiving the symbol is a seal of our love to him. (6.) Of the kingdom to come:<sup>1</sup> hence he speaks of the cup being the *Testament*. (7.) Of all the promises. These are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; but here they are specially and personally confirmed to us. This ordinance is the broad seal of heaven affixed to all that God has said; giving us a direct pledge and assurance that all that is in Christ is ours. It not only signifies but “seals to us all the benefits of the covenant of grace.” It says in our ears and to our hearts, “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.” Believing souls, let this be your prayer, “set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm?”<sup>2</sup>

III. *The Lord's supper applies and conveyz the blessings of Christ.* It is more than a sign; it is more than a seal; it is a real communication of spiritual blessings to believing souls. By it “we are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, with all their benefits, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.” Christ's body and blood are the two sources of blessing. His body, broken for us, is the storehouse in which all manner of food for the soul is treasured up. His blood, shed for us, is the fountain whence living waters flow to us, and out of which comes the “clean water” which is sprinkled upon us to wash away our sins. Both of these are *at all times* open and free. In believing we at all times are nourished, refreshed, and cleansed. But in the Lord's supper we receive fuller measures of blessing. The symbols of bread and wine are the channels through which God conveys to us the new covenant blessings. He makes use of them for pouring into believing souls all the blessings which flow from the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 29. Luke xxii. 16, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Song viii. 6.

broken body and shed blood of the Lord. "In the supper, rightly used, Christ Jesus is so joined to us that he becometh very nourishment and food to our souls."<sup>1</sup> The elements are to us what the hem of his garment was to the woman who had the issue of blood. When we partake of them believingly, virtue comes out of them, to feed, to strengthen, to heal, to cleanse, to refresh, to nourish the soul unto life eternal. All that is in Christ, faith draws out of these symbols, and thus they become "a feast of fat things" to the soul. Out of them we draw new and more vigorous life,—spiritual, heavenly, everlasting life. At this table we especially find Christ to be the bread of life, and we feed upon him as such. At this table all our graces are nourished and strengthened. The fruits of the Spirit are ripened in us. We "grow in grace," and are brought into nearer resemblance of our Lord himself. Sin is mortified; the flesh is crucified with its affections and lusts. The old man receives a deadly blow. The union between Christ and the soul is strengthened; and in all their parts the members of the body are drawn closer to their living head. The union between the saints is here cemented and confirmed. Here the bonds of love are gently yet firmly twined about believing souls, and we learn to love one another with a pure heart fervently, as one holy family, one blessed brotherhood. It is here we partake together of the "hidden manna," and the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. It is here we are fed with the finest of the wheat. It is here we drink the new wine of the kingdom, and are anointed with fresh oil. We feast with Jesus in the upper room. We lean upon his bosom like the beloved disciple. We sing with him the hymn he sang ere he crossed the Kedron. We go with him to Gethsemane, and with him we kneel, and agonize, and pray. We stand in Pilate's hall, and hear the voice which says, "behold the man!" We take our place by the foot of the cross, and are sprinkled with the drops of the crimson shower. We are brought close to his very side, and from his precious wounds we drink in salvation, receiving into our souls the healing virtue that flows from his hands, his feet, his side.

Thus we see that the Lord's supper is intended to be to

<sup>1</sup> Old Scotch Confession of Faith.

as a full storehouse,—an overflowing fountain of spiritual blessings. It is designed to furnish us with an abundant supply for our manifold wants. Let us mention in order a few particulars concerning these:

1. *It strengthens our faith.* For it holds up the glorious gospel of the blessed God to us in the most striking and impressive of all ways, namely, by outward signs. And also, it puts the seal and pledge of all blessings into our hands and lips.

2. *It makes plain the truth to our minds.* For by embodying invisible truth in visible signs, it renders it far more clear and easy to be understood. It illustrates the whole truth concerning Christ. It shews how free, how rich, how sufficient, how suitable is his salvation;—yet, like the common food of life, both absolutely necessary, and within the reach of all.

3. *It nourishes the soul.* Here we find how true are Christ's words, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," (John vi. 55.) Here we eat angels' food; we feed upon the bread of heaven. How can we be but nourished?

4. *It pours new life into the soul.* Here we not merely have life, but we have it more abundantly. Life pours into us from the fountain of life. We mount up with wings as eagles, we run and are not weary, we walk and are not faint.

5. *It ripens our graces.* We here bask in the rays of the sun of righteousness. The fruits of the Spirit ripen apace;—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Gal. v. 22.

6. *It kills sin.* Here we are taught to "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. 11. We feel as if nailed to the same cross,—buried in the same grave, rising, ascending, sitting with him at the right hand of God.

7. *It kindles our love.* It is truly a feast of love. It speaks wholly of love. The time when it was instituted;—the facts which it commemorates, the feeling which dictated the institution—every thing in it, breathes of love. It tells us of the love of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us,—love as *real* as the symbols which we touch and eat,—love as *personal* to us as these. How fitted to kindle love,—to warm the coldest bosom,—to soften the hardest heart,—to thaw the most frozen soul! How can we but love when seated



at the feast of love,—receiving the emblems of love,—listening to the words and tones of love.

8. *It unites us to one another, and separates us from the world.* It is at once an ordinance of union and separation,—union with Jesus and his people, separation from an ungodly world. It is the badge of discipleship. It marks us out from the world. It is a banner of defiance raised against the world. Like Noah the preacher of righteousness, “we condemn the world.” We confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; without a rest or a home on earth, but looking for a rest and a home beyond it, when pilgrim days are over, and the perils of the wilderness are exchanged for the plenty of our Father’s peaceful home; without a city here, but waiting for the new Jerusalem, that cometh down out of heaven from God; without honour or authority here, but expecting to reign with Christ for ever.

9. *It gives new ardour to our hopes.* It looks back to the first, and forward to the second coming of the Lord. It points to future glory. It carries us forward to the inheritance,—the kingdom,—the crown,—the restitution of all things,—the rest that remaineth for the people of God,—the bridal-day,—the marriage-supper of the Lamb. We sit here as at our eastern window to watch the first rays of coming day;—to see star after star fading from the heavens as the dawn approaches, and the sun prepares to rise,—“the sun of a morning without clouds,” bringing in the splendour of the everlasting day. We seem to hear the voice which sounded over the lonely rocks of Patmos in the ears of John; “He that testifieth these things saith, surely, I come quickly.” And with him we eagerly echo back the joyful words, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

*But who are to come to this table, and who are not to come?* It concerns us much to settle this. It was to his disciples that Jesus gave this bread and wine, and therefore none but *disciples* are to come. It is to remember Jesus that we come, and therefore we must first *know* Jesus; for unless we know him we cannot remember him. It is to have our souls nourished that we come, therefore they must first have been made *alive*, that is, we must be *born again*. We come to get the seal of forgiveness and adoption; therefore we must have been *forgiven* and *adopted* before we can



come. We come to declare our love to Jesus; therefore we must first have learned to *love* him. The feast is for the followers of the Lamb, not for the followers of the world. It is for saints, not for the unholy and unconverted. It is not for the profane, or the prayerless, or the formalist, or the self-righteous. It is not for the drunkard, or the unclean, or the swearer, or the Sabbath-breaker, or the Sabbath-walker, or the Sabbath-visitor, or those who only attend the house of God once a-day, or who buy and sell on the Sabbath. It is not for the lovers of gaiety and pleasure,—for the frequenters of the ball-room, or the theatre, or the card-table, or the race-course. All such, if they come, “eat and drink damnation to themselves.” What have men to do at the table of the Lord who never shed one tear for sin,—who never had an anxious hour about their souls—who never sought God, nor prized the Saviour? what fellowship hath Christ with Belial? Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils, ye cannot be a partaker of the Lord's table, and the table of devils. Let *unconverted souls* stay away; or rather let them come *immediately* to Christ, and then without delay come also to his table. Come to Jesus, and then come to the feast,—none more welcome than you.

*How are we to come?* Let a man examine himself, and let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. If we judge ourselves we should not be judged.<sup>1</sup> Let us wash our hands in innocency (in the blood of the innocent one, the spotless Lamb of God), and so let us compass the altar of the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.<sup>3</sup> I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.<sup>4</sup>

*A few questions on the Lord's Supper.*

1. Q. *By what names is the Lord's supper known?*

Ans. It is called *the sacrament*, because it is an holy ordinance. It is called *the Lord's Supper*, because instituted

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 28, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxvi. 6.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. iii. 18.

by, and in memory of, the Lord Jesus. It is called *the breaking of bread*, because of the bread there broken. It is called *the communion*, because therein we are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, and have fellowship with Him and with the saints. It is called *the Eucharist*, because Christ gave thanks, and it is an ordinance of thanksgiving. It is called *the feast*, (1 Cor. 5, 8.) because Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, and we feed upon him.

2. Q. *What do the broken bread and the poured out wine set forth to us?* Ans. They are memorials of Christ bruised, bleeding, dying for us; and do also set forth his body and blood as the whole food of our souls.

3. Q. *Are they mere signs?* Ans. No, truly; they also "seal and apply" to us all the blessings of Christ. They are God's appointed channels for conveying these to believing souls.

4. Q. *Is it not enough that we look at the symbols?* Ans. No, truly; we must *eat and drink* of them; thereby signifying our partaking of Christ spiritually by faith,—our receiving him into our souls just as we receive the bread and wine into our bodies. Eating and drinking in faith draws out special blessings, just as the woman's touching the hem of Christ's garment in faith drew out special blessings to her.

5. Q. *Who ought to go to this table?* Ans. *Living souls*; for dead souls cannot eat and drink. *Hungry and thirsty souls*; for otherwise what would a feast be? *Loving souls*; for without love, how can we compass the table of love? *Believing souls*; for without faith we cannot feed on Christ. *Regenerate souls*; for none but they have a right to the children's bread. In short, Christ's disciples,—Christ's people;—those whom he calls saints, beloved ones, his sheep, his members, his branches, his bride.—None else.

6. Q. *To what does the Lord's Supper point forward?* Ans. To the second coming of the Lord, in glory and majesty, to set up his kingdom, and sit down with his people at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE CITY OF REFUGE.

*"Appoint for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood."*—JOSHUA xx. 2, 3.

*"We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."*—ISAIAH xxvi. 1.

*"God is a refuge for us."*—PSALMS lxii. 8.

*"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee; neither stay thou in all the plain . . . haste thee, escape thither."*—GEN. xix. 17-22.

THERE were six cities of refuge in the land of Israel. These were so situated that any manslayer, when pursued, might find his flight directed and his escape assisted by the very ground where they stood. (1.) Three of them stood on one side of Jordan and three on the other. No river rolled between him and his place of safety. (2.) All of them stood in plains; Kedesh in the plains of Zaanaim, Sychem in the plains of Moreh, Hebron in a level wilderness, Golan and Ramoth-Gilead at the foot of their adjoining hills. The manslayer had no uphill race to run in seeking deliverance; there was nothing in his way which might hinder his flight. (3.) Near each city (except Bezer, which required no further mark, being seen afar on the long spacious heath) stood a hill, that served the purpose of an ensign to guide the guilty man, and to invite him to the refuge. Kedesh had the hill of Naphtali close by. Sychem had mount Gerizzim. Hebron had its vine-terraced heights, on which Abraham once stood and saw the smoke of Sodom. Golan had the heights of Bashan; and Ramoth-Gilead stood under the lofty hills of Gilead. He who appointed these cities took care that they should be marked afar off, that the steps of one seeking refuge might without difficulty be guided towards them. For it was intended by all these peculiarities, to show the sinner's road to the Redeemer. No river rolls between him and Christ! No hills raise their barrier between him and the Saviour! The way is plain and open; it is broad and level; and while yet afar off his eye catches a glimpse of that ensign which waves on Calvary, over the city of refuge,—*"As I live, saith the Lord, I have no*

pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will you die.”<sup>1</sup> This even while he is yet a great way off, kindles hope and keeps it alive.

One of these cities of refuge was Hebron,—well known as being the place where Abraham once sojourned. Let us linger for a little at this city, and call to mind some of those sights often seen in other days from its walls and within its gates. The inhabitants there dwelt safely as in a “peaceable habitation, in a sure dwelling, and in a quiet resting-place.” The vines clothed the surrounding hills, and rich fields waved over the plains of Mamre.

Not far off was the spot, where, under a spreading oak, Abraham “the friend of God”<sup>2</sup> had held communion with his Redeemer. Oftentimes in the cool of the day, when the breeze of evening had begun to awake, the people might be seen on the flat roofs of their houses, or the top of their city walls, enjoying the scene and remembering former days. Many a song of praise ascended, many a holy meditation was enjoyed, many a thankful emotion kindled. But occasionally this happy hour was suddenly disturbed by a piercing cry of alarm that resounded from the valley,—a cry of fear, and a cry of rage and wrath. They stopped their song and saw a trembling murderer with horror on his brow, in full speed making for the gate, and behind him with bare sword, the avenger of blood passing on with relentless fury. Sometimes, on such occasions, if for a moment the pursuer seemed to slacken his speed, they saw the weary manslayer incautiously sit down to rest, thinking that he was now so near his refuge, that he might abate his anxiety; and then the avenger would seize the favourable opportunity, dart on, and plunge the sword into his soul. Oh! the agonizing look the wretched man gave in death toward the city! and his awful cry of despair, as he yielded up his breath with guilt in his conscience, and remorse gnawing his soul! Sometimes too they saw one in his flight come close up to the gate; but he hesitated to enter, stood doubting, afraid to go in and trembling for the approach of the avenger, until, ere ever he was aware, the avenger smote him to the dust, and he breathed his last with his dying head bent down on the very threshold of the gate! But oftener still they saw the pursued, flying murderer come with full speed

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxxv. 27.



down the valley, reach the open gate, bound over the threshold, and stand in safety within! The elders of the city met him, and asked him how he had ventured thus boldly in. "You are stained with blood, and your trembling frame testifies that you are a guilty man?" "Yes, I own it is true, but on that very account I fled for refuge." "But why have you come hither? no native of the city is like you; they are all children of Abraham." "True, but though no *native* be like me, yet many like me have got in, for God himself has called it a city of refuge." "But you bring no recommendation?" "God never spoke of any recommendation being needed." "Still, you have given no reason why you in particular should expect to be received?" "Yes, for the warrant is, that *any* and *every* man-slayer may come." The elders smiled well-pleased; the man-slayer was secured in the place of refuge; and there was praise in all the city because another was saved. The delivered man soon joined in their hymns to the God of his life; but oftener still sang in their hearing some peculiar songs of praise, which none could sing but a man-slayer that had fled for refuge. (Rev. xiv. 3.) Frequently, too, the whole company of delivered men would meet together, talk over their dangers, tell of their escape, and unite their voice and heart in these songs of deliverance.

These events that happened in Israel were intended as a type of what takes place in the kingdom of God on earth. *The man-slayer*, wet with the blood of his fellow, is the type of a sinner. And in choosing no other than a man-slayer to be the type of a sinner, God points out the murderous nature of sin. Sin brings death on the man himself, and thrusts the sting of the second death into his soul. The sinning soul crucifies Christ afresh; it quenches, or, in other words, tries to *extinguish the life* of the Holy Spirit; it wishes that there were no God, or, in other words, aims at the very being of God the Father. O sinner, how deep is the crimson-dye of your soul! How can you escape the damnation of hell? On the other hand, the *avenger of blood* represents the stern but most righteous demands for vengeance, made by the holy law, pursuing the unforgiven sinner, in order to execute the sentence, "thou shalt surely die," (Gen. ii. 17.) And the city of refuge is the salvation provided for the sinner in Christ Jesus, bestowed without money, and without price, without preparation and without delay on every soul of man that flees to him as the refuge from the wrath to come.



From the walls and battlements of heaven, angels have seen many such sights as the men of Hebron used to see. Let us lead you to some of them.

1. *They have seen many a man-slayer.* They have seen many a soul—and you among the rest, stained with crimson guilt, yet sitting at ease. Have they not seen you destroy your soul? Then you are a manslayer. Have they not seen you by your words and influence prevent others from being saved? Have they not seen you wishing in your heart that God were away, or that there was no God? And is this not really wishing for and attempting to compass *the death of God!* You have wished there were no Christ, and no Holy Spirit! O blood-stained, murderous soul, you stand charged with murder, accomplished in regard to yourself, and your neighbours, and with designs against the life of the Holy God! Perhaps the devil keeps you at rest, and persuades you not to be alarmed. Eat, drink, and be merry! But, nevertheless, you are a *man-slayer*. You ruin your own soul, and your example ruins your friends; and you are an enemy that entertains murderous designs against God. The avenger has not forgotten you.

2. *They have seen many a man-slayer awakened.* Few sinners in our parishes remain unvisited by some convictions; yet few of them flee from the wrath to come. Some are left miserable by a sense of guilt, that hangs over them; like a black cloud, night and day,—“all their life-time subject to bondage,” (Heb. ii. 15.) They have many forebodings, yet companions, and pleasures, and their dislike of a change, and the secret hope that perhaps all is not true that is threatened, stifle their feelings, and hinder them from fleeing. Is this *your* state? Are you a sinner aware of your danger? If so, surely you *must* flee? You dare not sit still. What though you repent, and are sorry, and shed tears, and reproach yourself for your folly—all that is vain. The avenger of blood never ceases for that. Indeed, *you* are more likely to be cut off suddenly than many others; for your convictions will make Satan afraid of losing you, and your delaying to flee will provoke God, so that he will wait no more. Up, up and flee for your life! You dare not sit still. O if you would flee, there would be deep, deep interest in you, felt by the people on the walls of Hebron—the angels in heaven. To see you running to the city of refuge—O that would be a blessed sight! Up and run speedily! Many have run

along that road to the city; the way to Christ has been traversed by thousands, some more, and some less guilty than you, who knew that he was their only refuge. "The kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it."

3. *They have seen many fleeing towards the city.* This is more than being awakened to a sense of danger and need. They have begun to seek deliverance; they flee! Are you a fleeing sinner? If you are, there are some marks that you will not fail to have. For example, you will be affected by a sense of your own personal guilt and danger; you will not be fleeing just because others are doing it. You will have a feeling of *immediate need*; you cannot put off the matter to a distant day. You will also feel engrossed to a great degree with concern to escape; a fleeing man-slayer would not be hindered with the trifles on the road, or the people whom he met. You will forsake the company of friends that hinder you. Above all, your eye will be ever looking toward the mountain-height that marks the place of refuge, and along the plain that leads to it; your thoughts will be occupied with the open door; and your delight will be to hear of them who fled and got in safely. You will be ever looking for Jesus, and rejoicing in whatever leads to a view of him, whether a sermon, or the Bible, or prayer. You will be meditating on his completed work, which opens the fountain for sin and uncleanness. You will delight to read and hear of such as Paul, and Manasseh, and those Jerusalem-sinners who, in every view, were more than manslayers, for they crucified the "Son of Man," "the fellow of the Almighty." But remember there can be no safety for you short of the city; none, none, till you are within it. It is not being "almost persuaded to be a Christian;" it is not being "not far from the kingdom of God," that will save your soul. It is not setting out and running toward the city, nor getting within sight of it, nor arriving close at the gate, nor even touching the threshold, but it is getting over the threshold and getting in, that will be your safety. If the man-slayer stopped short of this, he might as well have never tried to flee. No sinner can be pardoned until a sufficient testimony is left against his sin, and this can be done only by his coming to Christ Jesus. No man-slayer could be forgiven until he got to the city, the very appointment of which was God's testimony to the man's guilt and deserved punishment. No sinner can

be forgiven in a righteous way, except by being hid in Christ. Hopes, desires, wishes, convictions, fears, sorrows, may be no more than shrubs that line the road to the city

4. *They have seen the joyful entrance of many into the city of refuge.* Fearful, weary, faint, they came up to the open gate, and ventured in, because it was set open for such as they. They believed Christ to be the sinner's way to the Father. They came to view his finished and perfect work in behalf of sinners; they examined it, and perceived both its fitness and its fulness; they saw that the Father considered it a wide enough entrance for any sinner; and so they ventured in. Jehovah had declared it to be sufficient, and that was enough for them. Let us try them, and see their grounds of faith. "You are stained with blood," it might be said to them; "you have been guilty of trampling under foot the Son of God, and aiming many a blow at the life and heart of God; and your conscience tells you that you deserve vengeance; and nothing but filth appears on your person. How dare you come thither?" They reply, "For the very reason that we are blood-stained sinners we fled to Jesus." Ask again, "How could you ever hope to see the king in his beauty; his people are a holy people?" They reply, "True, but blood-stained souls have become white in *his blood*,—his precious blood shed for this very end." "But you bring no recomendation? you say nothing of your previous efforts, prayers, tears, good deeds, sincere obedience?" "No, we say nothing of these, for they are not required to our being accepted in the Beloved." "Well, then, at least, shew why you in particular venture to come?" "Our warrant is his own sure word, *whosoever cometh*, I will in no wise cast out."

And now the gate closes them in. They shall go no more out. Angels welcome them with songs, and Father, Son, and Spirit, rest over them in love. There is joy in heaven over them! These that are thus redeemed are nevertheless not perfect yet. Their iniquities are forgiven, and every sin blotted out; but their hearts retain much corruption. They keep much in each other's company and help each other's joy. They often sing such songs as that of Romans viii. 31-4, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge

of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!" O what peace and joy! No frown of a displeased God, for his anger is turned away, and he comforts them! With joy they draw water out of the wells of salvation.

And as they survey and examine their city of refuge, they find new reasons for joy and enduring gratitude. Now that they are in Christ, they inquire freely as to the past; and they find that all along, from the first hour they began to flee, it was the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of Christ, who was drawing them, John vi. 44. At the time that they felt alarmed and yet lingered in their sins, it was a secret drawing of the divine hand that enabled them at length to get beyond others and really to flee for refuge. At the time when they had nearly stopped short, attracted by the golden apples which Satan scattered in their path, it was the Spirit that drew them on. At that moment, when, faint and weary, they had well nigh sat down in despair, it was the drawing of the Father through the Holy Spirit that brought them onward still. And when at length they saw so clearly where to rest, and felt themselves able to rest satisfied in Christ alone, it was the Holy Spirit who caused the scales to drop from their eyes, and who effectually persuaded their souls. O how full now is their gratitude to Father, Son, and Spirit,—“Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, and with everlasting kindness hast thou drawn us!” They are never heard to boast of any thing but of him; not even of their own faith, their eager running to the city. No; for that too was owing to the Spirit he sent into them, (Eph. ii. 8.) and it was not that, but the city, that saved them.

They reach farther still in their discoveries of God's wondrous ways towards them. They are taken into a chamber in the council-house of the city of refuge, and allowed to read its records. The Book of Life is shewn to them, and they find now that they were elected from all eternity! and that it was in consequence of the purpose of God, that they were called and drawn by the Spirit of Jesus. Amazing grace! How deeply fixed is the foundation of their safety! They feel humbled at the same time; for they were chosen for no good in themselves at all, but wholly to the praise and glory of Him who called them. Every new discovery yields



matter for praise and adoration. They go down to the gates to praise the Lord among the assembled people, They forsake not the assembling of themselves together, but go to their own company, (Acts iv. 23) whensoever opportunity occurs. Their life is a life of happy, cheerful faith in Him whose finished work redeemed them, and of unceasing love and devotion to Him who called them out of darkness into marvellous light. Often are they heard singing, "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gate, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is the rock of ages." (Isaiah xxvi. 1-4.)

But like the saved man-slayer who dared not be found beyond the gate of the city until the High Priest had gone to glory, (Number xxxv. 25) they dare not for an hour go out of their place of safety. They *abide* in Christ. However holy they become, whatever reputation they have gained, however honoured and distinguished for spiritual attainments, they abide in Christ alone. Their first security was found in him, and it is their security to the last. Though laden with the fruits of righteousness, and filled with all the graces of the Spirit, they depend for safety on the enclosing wall of their city of refuge, as much as does the sinner that only yesterday came in. And so they will remain till their *High Priest* enter upon "his glorious rest" (Isaiah xi. 10.); and then they shall share with him in that joy, each one receiving his inheritance and possessing an unchanging love. For this they are always longing. Oftentimes they ascend the battlements and towers of their strong city to look out for any signs of the coming glory; or sitting at their windows, they turn their eye to the east to see if there be any streaks of the dawn. For when from the New Jerusalem the tidings shall arrive that Jesus our High Priest has entered into his rest, then shall his redeemed return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS.

*"Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints."*—JUDE 14.

*'Behold I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.'*—REV. xvi. 15.

MY DEAR READER,—Let me speak to you a few words respecting this solemn subject—the second coming of the Lord. In doing so, I shall confine myself, as much as possible, to the words of God himself, both because they are the fittest and the plainest—"quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword;" and because I do not wish you to evade the matter, by saying that I am pressing upon you the uncertain opinions of man. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Reader! "that same Jesus who was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as he went up into heaven:"<sup>1</sup> The heavens must receive him until the times of restitution of all things.<sup>2</sup> Then shall he come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and with all his mighty angels, to call *you* to account for the deeds done in the body. Are you ready for his coming? Can you abide his presence? Will you be able to stand before the Judge of all? He once came in meekness; he shall then come in majesty;—he once came in shame; he shall then come in glory;—he once came in weakness; he shall then come in power;—he once came to save; he shall then come to judge—to give to every man according as his work shall be.<sup>3</sup>

I. *He comes to take vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not his Gospel.* 2 Thess. i. 8. *This is the day of grace; that shall be the day of vengeance;—this is the time of his mercy; that shall be the time of his fierce anger.* His long-suffering shall then be wearied out, and his love shall have passed away. His eyes—those very eyes that wept over Jerusalem, shall then be a flame of fire, piercing you like lightning, and consuming you with their terrible glance. His feet—those very feet that rested in their weariness upon the well of Sychar, shall

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xxii. 12.

be “fine brass,” to tread you down, as in the wine-press of his wrath.<sup>1</sup> “The day of the Lord cometh; it is nigh at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”<sup>2</sup> Are you prepared for that day of terror and darkness? Have you fled like the dove to the clefts of the rock?<sup>3</sup> Have you found shelter in the man who is the hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest?<sup>4</sup>

II. *He comes to judge the world in righteousness.* Ps xcvi. 13. He is now the Saviour; but he shall then be the Judge; he is now upon the mercy-seat; he shall then be on the throne—the great white throne, before which the living and the dead, the small and great shall stand. His judgment shall be just and wise. It shall be impartial and unchangeable. His sentences shall never be reversed or altered throughout eternity! All nations, and kindreds, and tongues shall be summoned to his bar. *You* shall be there. *You*, who are now reading these lines, and thinking perhaps but little of that awful day! How will you answer the summons? How will you give in your account? Do you tremble? Does *unforgiven sin* fill you with alarm? Then look to Jesus *now*!<sup>5</sup> Look, and be forgiven! Look, and be saved for ever!

III. *He comes to raise the dead.* “Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming.” 1 Cor. xv. 23. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.<sup>6</sup> That resurrection-morning is the believer’s joyful hope; for then he shall see Jesus face to face; and the last relics of sin and suffering be left behind him in his tomb. But is it full of hope and joy to you? Does the thought of that morning fill your soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Or are you of those who, when that day arrives, would, a thousand times over, wish to be allowed to remain for ever in the tomb, rather than be dragged up as criminals from their cells, to hear their final doom? If so, oh then flee *now* to a *risen Saviour*! His resurrection tells you of a finished atonement—an open fountain—a rent veil—a free mercy-seat—a gracious welcome from an injured, but still loving Father. Flee *now*—tarry not; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiv. 19.<sup>2</sup> Joel ii. 1, 2.<sup>3</sup> Song ii. 14.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah xxxii. 2.<sup>5</sup> Isaiah xlv. 22.<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 16.

IV. *He comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* 2 Thess. i. 10. Reader, are you a *saint*? Are you one of those in whom Jesus shall be *glorified* in that day? Are you one of those who shall *admire* him then? Ah! do you glorify him now? Do you *admire* him now? Or do you despise and reject him? All his saints admire him: do you admire him too? Angels praise him: do you praise him too? The Father delights in him: do you delight in him also? He is the Father's beloved: is he your beloved too! Oh "kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when once his wrath is kindled but a little."<sup>1</sup>

V. *He comes to make all things new.* Rev. xxi. 5. He comes as the second Adam, to undo all that the first Adam did. He comes to repeal and remove the curse to which creation has been subjected by the fall.<sup>2</sup> We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.<sup>3</sup> Reader! if all things are to be made *new*, your heart must also be made new. There must be a new creation *within* you, if you would possess or enjoy the new creation without you. There must be the new heart before you can sing the new song. Have you been renewed? Have old things passed away? If not, you are as yet without any hope of, or meetness for the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away? Oh hear the words of Jesus! "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." Then thou shalt walk with him in white, and shalt eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

VI. *He comes to bind Satan.* Rev. xx. 1—3. As the woman's promised seed he comes to bruise and crush the serpent's head. In this his saints rejoice. But, Reader, have you a share in that rejoicing? Are Christ's triumphs your triumphs? Are the victories of the Lamb your victories? Or, are you of the serpent's seed, who are all in that day to share its doom? If you are now in Satan's ranks, then your overthrow and perdition are certain. Oh quit these ranks for ever! Join the Captain of our salvation. Take up your cross and follow him. Then the conquests of Jesus shall be your conquests; and the spoils of Jesus shall be your spoils!

<sup>1</sup> Ps. ii. 12.<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 19—23.<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 13.



VII. *He comes to the marriage supper.* Rev. xix. 7—9. He is the bridegroom. He is now “tarrying.”<sup>1</sup> He will not tarry long. He will soon be here, and the cry will be raised—Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Reader, are you ready? Have you oil in your vessels? Are your loins girt about, and your lamps burning? Have you the fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints?<sup>2</sup> Oh be warned, lest you be foolish virgin! lest you should have no wedding garment! lest, ere you seek admittance, the door be shut. Oh remember, blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.<sup>3</sup>

VIII. *He comes to “sit upon the throne of his glory.”* Matt. xix. 28. “He shall judge among the nations.”<sup>4</sup> He shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.<sup>5</sup> He is to be the true Solomon—the Prince of Peace. All things are to be put under his feet.<sup>6</sup> He is to reign in righteousness.<sup>7</sup> His kingdom and his sceptre are a kingdom and a sceptre of righteousness.<sup>8</sup> The kingdoms of this world shall become his one glorious kingdom; and the crowns of earth be placed upon the head of Him who alone is worthy.

But into that kingdom nothing that defileth shall enter (Rev. xxi. 27.) Respecting it He himself declared, “Verily verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John iii. 3. READER! ARE YOU BORN AGAIN? If not, then the gates of that kingdom are closed against you? You cannot enter there. Oh “REPENT! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. iv. 17.) The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. It is but a little, and you shall hear the last trumpet sound. It is but a little, and it shall be said to you, “Come to judgment, come away.” He that shall come will come and will not tarry. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 5.<sup>2</sup> Rev. xix. 18.<sup>3</sup> Rev. xix. 9.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah ii. 4.<sup>5</sup> Isaiah xxiv. 23.<sup>6</sup> Heb. ii. 8.<sup>7</sup> Isaiah xi. 4—9; xxxii. 1.; Psalm lxxii. 2.<sup>8</sup> Psalm xlv. 6, 7

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# GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT,

THE SINNER'S PLEDGE AND PLEA FOR EVERY BLESSING.

*"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."*—ROM. viii. 32.

THE apostle here first states a fact; and then he tells us what that fact warrants us to expect from God. He reminds us of what God *has done*, and then infers from thence what God *will do*. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;" *therefore* there is nothing that he will deny us; "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

Now God had every reason to spare his Son, and none to induce him to deliver him up. For, 1. He was the object of the Father's infinite and unutterable love. "The Father loveth the Son."<sup>1</sup> "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."<sup>2</sup> And whom does an earthly father spare most, but his best beloved child?<sup>3</sup> Whom is he most unwilling to deliver up to pain or infamy, but the son of his affections? And is not this unwillingness in proportion to the love he bears him? The more that he delights in him, the more does he desire to spare him. If such then be the feeling in the narrow, frozen, selfish soul of man, what must it be in the infinite bosom of the infinite God? Which of all the beings in the universe would he have most wished to spare; which of them all would he be most reluctant to deliver up? The Son of his love! That Son in whom his "soul delighted;"<sup>4</sup>—that Son whom he loved infinitely more than all the angels of heaven. 2. He was infinitely worthy of all that infinite love. He was worthy of the love of all creatures, worthy of the love of all angels, worthy of the love of God! Of no other being can it be said that it is *worthy* of the love of God, far less that it is infinitely worthy of it. Yet so it was with the Son; for in him there was infinite glory, infinite excellence, infinite beauty, infinite perfection. In him there was an infinitely worthy object for the whole infinite love of the eternal Father. 3. He loved the Father with an infinite love; and what more painful or bitter to a father than to part with a child that loves him tenderly, and clings to him fondly, and cannot bear the thought of separation? Here was another reason why the Father might have spared the Son. 4. We had no claim upon God for such a gift as this. In truth we had no claim upon him for any gift at all.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 35. <sup>2</sup> Matt. iii. 17. <sup>3</sup> Mal. iii. 17. <sup>4</sup> Isa. xlii. 1.

Even unfallen creatures cannot properly be said to have a claim upon God for his blessings, for what he gives to them even, he bestows of his free bounty. Much less then can fallen beings have any claims upon him. Even for his commonest mercies we have none. Even for a morsel of food or a drop of cold water we have none,—no claim at all! Our only claim is for wrath, for punishment, for hell! This is our only claim, as sinners; what possible claim then could we have for the gift of his own Son! Yet it was for those who had no claim upon him for any thing but an eternal hell, that he delivered up his Son! Had it been for angels who had never sinned, it would not have been so marvellous.<sup>1</sup> But for us!—for sinners, for enemies, for those who hated him,—how passing wonderful! We might conceive some reasons why he should give him for angels, but what reason can be imagined why he should part with him for us! The richest gift for the unworthiest of all! And then not only undeserved by us; but unsought, undesired, uncared for; nay hated and spurned!<sup>2</sup>

Truly the Father had every conceivable reason to spare his Son, and none that we could have imagined for delivering him up. Yet all this did not move him to withhold the gift. “He spared him not.”

And why does the apostle use the word “spare” in speaking of this gift? To show us that it was an infinite sacrifice that he was consenting to make;—to teach us that it was no light, no trivial thing; the occasion of no light, no trivial emotion in the Father’s bosom;—to imply that (to speak after the manner of men) it cost him an infinite struggle to part with such a Son! As if he would say that had it been possible he would far rather have spared him; far rather have allowed the cup to pass from him, or never put that cup into his hands at all. And to bring out this idea more strongly, the apostle adds “delivered him up,” that is, he delivered him up as the judge does the criminal; handed him over as a victim to his relentless foes. He took him out of his bosom, where he had dwelt from eternity, and gave him over to the disposal of cruel enemies. How amazing! He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all! He freely consented to the mighty, the infinite sacrifice!<sup>3</sup>

And why was it that these weighty reasons availed nothing to stay his purpose? Why was it that the Father spared not his Son? That Son himself answers the question, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 16. <sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 6—8; Eph. ii. 4, 5. <sup>3</sup> Isa. liii. 10.

not perish, but have everlasting life."<sup>1</sup> This was the one reason which prevailed against all those manifold and infinitely weighty reasons for sparing the Son. Though he was infinitely beloved of the Father,—though he was infinitely worthy of all the Father's love,—though he infinitely loved him in return, and had done nothing to deserve any thing but love,—though we had no claim upon God for such a gift; yet *God so loved the world that he gave his Son!* He spared not *him* that he might spare *us*,—he delivered up *him* that he might not deliver up *us*,—he parted with *him* that he might not part with *us*,—he gave *him* up to the curse, that he might obtain for *us* the blessing,—he poured on *him* the vials of his infinite wrath, that he might pour out on *us* the full measure of his infinite love.

Yes it was *for us* that he delivered him up! It was that he might take our place and bear our sins, that the Father sent the Son! And we know that the Son of God has come and stood in our place. "He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."<sup>2</sup> "He has finished transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness."<sup>3</sup> He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He took not merely our nature, becoming bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, but our place, our room, our state, our legal responsibilities. He is not simply a saviour; but a saviour as being a sacrifice, a substitute, a surety. Hence in the salvation of a soul, there is a complete *exchange* between the sinner and the Saviour. He takes all that belongs to us as sinners, and gives us in exchange all that belongs to himself as the Father's holy and well-beloved Son. He takes from us all our sin, all our guilt, all our unworthiness, and gives us in exchange all his infinite righteousness, and innocence, and worthiness in the Father's eyes. He transfers to us what belongs to himself. Thus "*He* is made unto us righteousness;"<sup>4</sup> and thus *we* are "made accepted in the beloved."<sup>5</sup> "As by one man's disobedience many were sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous."<sup>6</sup>

It was for this very end that the Father spared him not. It was to bring about this transference, this complete exchange, that he delivered him up for us all. He placed him in our room, that he might place us in his. He treated him as we deserved to be treated, in order that he might treat us as he deserved to be treated. He dealt with

<sup>1</sup> Jo. iii. 16.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.    <sup>3</sup> Dan. ix. 24.    <sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. i. 6.    <sup>6</sup> Rom. v. 19.



him as a sinner, in order that he might deal with us as righteous,—perfectly, yea infinitely righteous. He inflicted on him all that should have been inflicted on us, in order that he might bestow upon us all that should be bestowed on him. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”<sup>1</sup> “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”<sup>2</sup>

And this exchange is *free* to all! It is infinitely glorious, yet it is entirely *free*,—free to every man as a sinner, just as he is, just as he stands! It is without money and without price. It takes nothing for granted, but that we need it. It requires neither price nor preparation, nor prerequisite on our part. It is absolutely and altogether free. And herein are the glad tidings of great joy comprised. God addresses each of us, and asks us to consent to this exchange. This is all. He does not ask us to pay for it, or to endeavour to deserve it or to qualify ourselves for receiving it; but just that we should consent to it—that we should “submit ourselves to the righteousness of God.” All he asks is to allow him to clothe us with the righteousness of his Son: to take away our filthy raiment and clothe us with the fine linen clean and white!

Reader! are not these “good tidings of great joy?” Could any thing be more fitted to gladden the heart of a sinner who knows that ere long he must stand before God in judgment, and has nothing about him but unrighteousness and desert of hell? And these tidings are as true as they are glad. If then you are not comforted or gladdened by them, it must be because you receive them not—because you will not consent to this blessed exchange. It is not because your sins are too many or too great to be forgiven; it is not because your heart is too hard to be softened or your nature too corrupt to be renewed;—it is just because you put away from you the message of peace, and are too proud to consent to be freely forgiven. “I would have gathered you,” says Christ weeping over Jerusalem, but “ye would not.”<sup>3</sup> And so it is still. “*I would; but ye would not,*” is the perdition of those who neglect the great salvation.

Reader! The most high God, the God of heaven and earth, this day renews his entreaties to you. He proposes to you the exchange of which I speak. He comes to you and says, “Wilt thou consent to have my Son for thy substitute? Wilt thou consent to part with all that is thine own, and take in exchange all that is his? Wilt thou part with thine own fancied claims, and take as a substitute for these the claims of Jesus? In approaching me in prayer wilt thou

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liii. 6.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxiii. 37.

take his claims instead of thine own?<sup>1</sup> In looking forward to the judgment-seat, wilt thou take his claims instead of thine own? In all thy transactions with me wilt thou consent to be treated upon the ground of his merits and not thine own? Art thou willing, that in dealing with thee I should remember what *he* has done, and not what thou hast done, or can do? I am willing that this should be the footing on which we are henceforward to stand, and that this should be the manner of our dealings together; *art thou willing?* If thou art willing, then all is well. Henceforth we meet on holy ground; henceforth I deal with thee as I deal with Christ; I count thee righteous as he is righteous, and I treat thee, love thee, listen to thee, delight over thee as such. But if thou wilt not consent to this exchange; if thou clingest to thine own claims either in part or in whole; if thou wilt not be *wholly* represented by Christ, and looked upon by me *in him*, and not in thyself; then thou must reap as thou art sowing; thou must be judged according to thine own standard, and take thy stand at the judgment-seat in thine own name and not in his, and be dealt with to the uttermost according to thine own deservings, and receive the eternal wrath to which alone thou hast any claim.”<sup>2</sup>

Reader! Is not a proposal like this a most gracious and blessed one for you, a child of wrath? Could any exchange be fairer or more profitable? Why do you hesitate as if you stood in doubt as to its fairness? Why delay as if you thought it unnecessary? Ah! if such a proposal were made in heaven to the unfallen spirits above, would not the highest archangel round the throne rejoice to embrace it? Is there an angel there that would not welcome such an exchange? They are sinless and righteous, no doubt, and live under God's perpetual smile; yet their righteousness is but that of a creature at the best. How gladly then would they put off their own created righteousness, that they might be clothed with the uncreated righteousness of God! How eagerly would they part with their own creature beauty, however glorious and dazzling, that they might shine in the infinite uncreated beauty of God's eternal Son? And shall a sinner be loath to part with his polluted raiment, his vile unrighteousness, that he may receive in return such an infinitely perfect righteousness, such an infinitely glorious garment, as that on which the Father gazes with delight unutterable?

But is the exchange really so free? It is. And is it free to me as I am? Yes, just as thou art. All things are ready, come then to the feast. “But my sins, my sins, so

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxxiv. 9. John xv. 7. <sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 1—3; x. 28, 29. xii. 25.

aggravated, so innumerable; are these no hindrance?" None. If thy sins were not great, thou wouldst not need such a righteousness; and the greater thy sins are, the greater thy need for parting with them without delay. "But my hardness of heart, my want of love, my imperfect convictions of sin, my dreadful insensibility, are these not reasons for doubting, and must I not get these in some measure removed before I can venture to welcome the proposed exchange." What! must you have a soft heart, a holy nature and deep repentance, *before* coming to the Saviour?<sup>1</sup> Is the Holy Spirit to give you these in order that you may have some right or warrant to go to him? Are you not desiring these in order that you may go to him as something less, something better than a wretched hard-hearted, wrath-deserving sinner? Are you not wishing for some claims of your own to add to those of Christ, or to be your own plea in asking God to confer Christ's claims upon you? If you are utterly destitute of such *feelings* as you desire, then all you can say is, just that you are utterly destitute of any claim of your own at all. And is not that the point to which God wishes you to come? Is not that the very state of soul which makes the claims of Jesus appear infinitely desirable?<sup>2</sup>

Reader! listen to God's loving proposals and entreaties. Oh! defer not to make so glorious an exchange. It is freely set before you. If you have it not, it is because you reject it. It is not because God would not consent, but because you would not. God says, "whosoever will;"<sup>3</sup> and could any proposal be more freely, more graciously made; or could any proposal be more exactly suitable to you? "Whosoever will" is enough to answer all your objections, and to remove all your fears!

Such, reader, is the fact which the apostle states; now let us observe how he reasons from it. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.*" Such is the inference which the apostle draws from the simple fact to which he had alluded! And can any reasoning be more forcible or conclusive? He that has already given the greater gift, will he deny the less? He that has already given us the whole ocean, will he refuse us a single drop? He that has given us unfathomable mines of gold, will he deny us a single particle? He that has given us the full sun in the firmament, will he deny us a solitary beam? Will the God that has already parted with his

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 31.<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 71, 18.<sup>3</sup> Rev. xxii. 17.

richest and most precious gifts, refuse us his lesser ones? Will he who has given his own Son, deny us any thing? Is such a thing possible? Is it conceivable? Would it not be the greatest of all imaginable contradictions? The simple *fact* then, that God has given his Son, is of itself, and by itself, perfectly sufficient to warrant our absolute and unlimited confidence in God; so that it seems a thing impossible and incredible, that a sinner understanding and believing that simple fact, could have any thing less than the apostle's confidence.

1. The infinitely weighty reasons mentioned at the beginning, why God might have been expected to spare his Son, do not exist in this latter case. These reasons stood in the way of God's giving his son; but they do not stand in the way of his giving us anything else. Now, if he gave his Son, his unspeakable gift, when there were so many reasons against it, will he withhold his *lesser* gifts, when there are none of these reasons at all in the way? Impossible. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

2. It cost him much to part with his Son; it cost him nothing to give every other blessing. Nay, so far from costing him any thing, he delights to bestow them. He is weary of withholding, but never weary of giving. Now, if we freely parted with what cost him such an infinite sacrifice, will he refuse us what costs him nothing but the delight of giving? He delights to give us his Holy Spirit. He delights to quicken us, to renew us, to sanctify us, to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. It costs him nothing to do all that. Will he then refuse us his Spirit? Will he refuse to make us holy? Will he need many arguments to persuade him to do so? Impossible! for he has already given his Son! and "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

3. He gave his Son unasked and undesired by us. We did not ask him to give his Son. Nay, we cared nothing about such a gift. We cared nothing about God or his favour at all. He might justly have said, "They do not want to be saved. Why should I save them? They do not want eternal life; they do not want pardon, or reconciliation, or deliverance from sin. Why should I be a such a cost to obtain these blessings for them? Why should I part with my well-beloved Son for the sake of sinners who hate me and my gifts, who have never asked, never desired any such blessings; nay, who hate and scorn them." God might well have said so; but his thoughts



were not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, and therefore, though we desired nothing of him, he gave his Son, his unspeakable gift! And having given us **such a gift** unsought, undesired, will he deny us any thing when we apply for it? In this light, how brightly does that glorious promise beam which came from the lips of the Son himself, "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find?"<sup>1</sup> And was it not in this very way that he taught us to reason when he said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water."<sup>2</sup>

4. When he gave his Son, there was no intercessor to plead for us; no name that could have been used to prevail with him to do so; yet he spared not his Son! What, then, will he not give us, now that we can go to him and plead the beloved name of the beloved Son! What is there that he can refuse when we have that Son for an intercessor at his right hand above?

5. When he gave his Son for us, he saw nothing in us but sin; yet he did not refuse his unspeakable gift. Is it possible, then, that we can be denied any thing when we appear before him in the righteousness of his Son? If our unrighteousness did not prevent him delivering up his Son, what is there that we may not expect when he looks upon us as altogether righteous in him?

6. The fact of our being sinners did not hinder him from freely giving his own Son; is it possible, then, that the fact of our being sinners now will lead him to refuse his other blessings? Our sinfulness was no barrier in the one case, can it be so in the other? If our guilt was a sufficient reason for refusing us any gift, then surely it should have hindered him from giving us his richest and most glorious gift; but if it was for us, when we were ungodly, that Christ was given—if it was when we were enemies and rebels that the Father delivered up his Son for us—if all our ungodliness, and enmity, and rebellion, did not keep back "the unspeakable gift," is it conceivable that any or all of these together can keep back his lesser gifts?

God's gift of his Son is thus the pledge, the sure and infinite pledge of every other gift; a pledge so sure and so infinite as to make it the greatest of all impossibilities that he should bestow the one and deny the other; a pledge thrown down freely to sinners, and which, therefore, every one who hears of it may take up and go at once with it to God just as he is, in the assured confidence, that he who

<sup>1</sup> Luke xi. 9—13.

<sup>2</sup> John iv. 10; Rom. v. 10.

spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him also freely give us all things. This simple fact, that God has not spared his own Son, is of itself sufficient to assure us of every thing. What more do we need to call forth the most unbounded confidence towards God? What greater or surer pledge could God give us; and if this is not enough of itself to awaken the sinner's confidence, what is there in heaven or earth that can do it? Is there not in that simple, but infinitely glorious fact, a foundation laid, broad enough, and deep enough, to sustain the full confidence of the chief of sinners? Can any thing be added to it so as to make it more secure or suitable for the guiltiest of the human race to build upon?<sup>1</sup> Can any thing in us, or done by us, or felt by us, or wrought in us, make it more sufficient or suitable? If, then, we can hear of it, and yet feel no confidence or assurance, is it not plain that we do not fully understand its meaning, or appreciate its glorious sufficiency? There must be some mistake in our minds about the matter, if we can admit the fact here stated, and yet not draw the apostle's conclusion. That fact of itself is sufficient to dispel every doubt and banish every fear. That God, who spared not his Son, is surely a being whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, and whose ways are not as our ways, and to whom, therefore, however guilty, however worthless, we may come "boldly," nothing doubting. Nay, to come with less than boldness must be sin, for it is just telling him that his gift of his Son is not sufficient to give *you* confidence, without some addition, which you hope in due time he will confer on you, or which you may work out for yourself.<sup>2</sup>

But you will say, it was an inspired apostle that reasoned in this way, and, *his* example is not exactly suited to your case. This might do for him, but you do not think it is enough for you. But, let me ask, does he speak here as an apostle, or simply as a sinner? Does he say, I am an apostle, therefore God will deny me nothing? No. Though he was the chief among the apostles, he reasons as the chief of sinners,—as one, who knew nothing in himself, nothing in the whole world to give him confidence, but just the fact that God spared not his own Son. He reasons from a fact which is as open to you as it was to him. He rested his confidence on a truth which is the same to you or any sinner as it was to him. Why not then draw the same conclusion, and with the triumphant confi-

But you will say, this way of reasoning may be right for advanced Christians, but it does not suit my case, who cannot venture to call myself a Christian yet, who am nothing but a sinner. Well, but was it as a saint or as a sinner that Paul reasoned thus? Did he say, because I am an advanced saint, therefore God will freely give me all things. No; he did not rest his confidence on the fact of his being a saint, but simply on the fact that God did not spare his Son? Go thou and do likewise.

But you will say, oh! if I were but conscious of the Holy Spirit's work in me, I would have no hesitation in reasoning thus; but till then it would be presumption in me to do so. Now I know, that it is the Holy Spirit that alone can teach and enlighten you, and that, if he do not show you the things of Christ, my showing will be vain. But remember that the Spirit works, not by giving something new in yourself as a ground of confidence, but by showing you the fulness and excellence of the Father's gift, as an infinitely sufficient ground of confidence for the chief of sinners. The Holy Spirit does not show you something good in yourself to rest on or take peace from, but he leads your eye to the divine resting-place for weary souls. And remember Paul did not say, "He who has given me his Holy Spirit will not refuse me anything;" but "he who spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." It was the Father's gift of Christ, and not his gift of the Holy Spirit that the apostle built upon; and why should not you go, and, *just as you are*, do the same?

But you will say, oh! I have no evidences of grace, no deep convictions of sin, no true repentance, nothing but a hard heart, a blind understanding, a seared conscience, a stupid and insensible soul. Well, but was it because he had got all these evidences that you desire, that the apostle exclaimed so boldly, "how shall he not freely give us all things?" No, he did not get his confidence from these, but from the simple fact, that God spared not his own Son. Go then with all your hardness, and deadness, and coldness; go just as you are, and take refuge in the same cleft of the rock in which the apostle found shelter for himself. It is as free to you as to him; it is as free to you this moment, as it ever will or can be.

But you will say, it may be so, but the state of my soul is so bad, my heart so hard and insensible, I am altogether so carnal sold under sin, that I often despond, and think it impossible that even God can do such a mighty work in me, or effect such a glorious change. Ah! and is it thus you reason, with regard either to the power or the willingness of

that God who has already given his own Son? Has he given his Son, and do you think, after that, it is too much to hope that he will change your heart? Is the renewing of a single soul a greater work or wonder than the gift of his Son? Give up such dishonouring doubts. Is anything too hard for the God that has parted with Christ? Is anything too much for the love of him who spared not his Son. Has he given his Son, and will he refuse his Holy Spirit? Has he given his Son, and will he refuse to renew you in the spirit of your mind?

Oh! think of this! Ponder the apostle's glorious and resistless argument. Remember that the fact of your being lost, worthless, ungodly, hard-hearted, an enemy, a rebel, did **not** hinder him from giving his Son. And if they did not hinder that, will they hinder anything? Nay, so far from these being reasons against God's sending Christ, they were the very reasons that led him to send him to save us. How perverse then, how unkind, to suppose that he will take advantage of your guilt or enmity now, to turn you away from the mercy-seat, and put your confidence to shame! Can any amount or any kind of unworthiness in you, make it less true that God spared not his own Son? So long then, as that simple fact remains the same, you are not merely *warranted*, but *bound* to come to God with confidence, whatever may be the extent of your guilt, or the depravity of your heart.

Two things then are plain from the apostle's words, first, that we cannot ask too confidently; and secondly, that we cannot ask too much.

First, we cannot ask too *confidently*, for our boldness comes from our knowledge of a *fact*, of whose certainty there can be no doubt. That fact properly understood, is enough to assure us of everything. This simple fact, if it be sufficient to assure you of anything, is sufficient to assure you of everything. Nothing less than this could have given you the shadow of a hope, and nothing more than this is needed to give you the most perfect confidence. To have less than this full confidence, is just to say, that God has given us the greater gift, but grudges us the lesser. To have less is to dishonour God, and to slight his gift. It is just saying, that this pledge is not enough for you: that the love implied in this gift is not sufficient for you to rest on, without some inward pledge, for which you are waiting! Less than this confidence then must be presumption on your part; it must be self-righteousness and pride. This is the only way in which your doubts and suspicions can be accounted for. For are you not reversing the apostle's argu-



ment, and saying, that though God has not spared his Son, but delivered him up, yet you are not sure whether he will, notwithstanding this, give you anything!

Secondly, we cannot ask too much. It is not possible to expect too much from one who has already freely bestowed such a glorious gift. The whole universe is nothing in comparison with this. Nay all *spiritual* blessings are as nothing when compared with this infinite gift; so that it is not possible for us to desire too much, or to ask too much so long as we know that the God of whom we are asking, is he who spared not his own Son. Is anything too hard for him? Is anything too much for him? Is anything, therefore, too great or too glorious for you to ask and to expect at his hands? The conclusion then to which we are brought in regard to this whole matter, is just that in which the apostle in another place sums up his argument, "having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated through the vail, that is, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."<sup>1</sup>

Here then is the sinner's hope, the sinner's welcome, and the sinner's peace! Come, sinner, come! Come, wanderer, come! There is room enough for you in the heart of him who spared not his own Son. It is an infinite heart, a heart whose dimensions are altogether boundless, and can take in millions such as you! It is to the embrace of the everlasting arms that we invite you to hasten, and their infinite circle is wide enough to compass myriads such as you! The bosom on which we ask you to recline, is that bosom of love out of which the eternal Son came forth, as the Father's gift to man, and could there be any pillow softer or safer on which to lay your weary head? Return then, thou banished one,—thou "captive exile,"<sup>2</sup> to thy Father's house! Come, lost one, come! Come now; come just as you are; come without price or preparation. For Father, Son, and Spirit unite in proclaiming, "him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews x. 19—22.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah li. 14.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 37.

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[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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# SALVATION TO THE UTMOST.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."  
—HEB. vii. 25.

It is of Jesus, the great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, that these words are spoken. It is He who is the "Surety of the better covenant."<sup>1</sup> It is He who hath the "unchangeable priesthood."<sup>2</sup> It is He who having "offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."<sup>3</sup> He therefore is a Saviour to the uttermost; and this not only because of what he did on earth for the putting away of sin, but because of what he is now doing in heaven as an ever-living intercessor, carrying into effect that glorious work which he completed on the cross. It is in the knowledge of this Saviour that we have eternal life. Let us then inquire what God has taught us in these words concerning him. And may the Holy Spirit testify of him to us, enlightening the eyes of our understanding, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God!

1. *Christ is a Saviour.* "He is able to save." It was on this account that he is described by the prophet Isaiah,<sup>4</sup> as "mighty to save;" and for this he was named JESUS, because "he saves his people from their sins."<sup>5</sup> This was the purpose for which he was sent;—"the Father sent the Son to be the *Saviour* of the world."<sup>6</sup> This was the errand which he fulfilled,—"the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."<sup>7</sup> It was for this that he spoke to the people when on earth,—"these things I say that ye might be saved."<sup>8</sup> For this he was born, for this he lived, for this he died, for this he rose again, for this he ascended up on high,—"Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a *Saviour*."<sup>9</sup> And from what does he save? He saves from sin, from guilt, from wrath, from the curse, from a present evil world, from hell, from Satan himself. From all these he is a Saviour, a complete Saviour, the only Saviour, a Saviour not for those who *deserve* salvation, but for those who *need* it.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vii. 22.<sup>2</sup> Heb. vii. 24.<sup>3</sup> Heb. x. 12.

Isaiah lxiii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. i. 21.<sup>5</sup> 1 John iv. 14.<sup>6</sup> Matt. xviii. 11.<sup>7</sup> John v. 34.<sup>8</sup> Acts v. 31.

But *how* is he thus “able to save?” (1.) Because he is **GOD**—the Lord God Almighty, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. All authority and dominion are his; all power either to save or to destroy. (2.) He is “able to save,” because he is the **GOD-MAN**, God manifest in the flesh, Immanuel, God with us; and thus he has all power, created and uncreated, human and divine, finite and infinite, centred in himself. Who could be more able to be a Saviour than he who is God; and who could be more suitable to be *our* Saviour than he who is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, our kinsman, our brother.<sup>1</sup> (3.) He is “able to save,” because of the **WORK** which he has done, by coming into our place, taking upon him our responsibilities, and bearing our sins. It was not mere *power*, though infinite, that could save us. It must be power put forth in a righteous way. And until there was a righteous way opened up for its exercise, it could do nothing for our salvation. Therefore it is in his *work* that his great power and strength as the Saviour may be said to lie; for had there been no sacrifice or atonement, not even an infinite arm could have saved us. As long as infinite righteousness was *against* us, it was in vain though infinite power were *for* us. But Christ’s atoning work has brought infinite power, and righteousness, and holiness, as well as infinite love and grace, all over to the same side. None of these are against us now. Our salvation is in full accordance with them all. Through the “blood of his cross” he has made reconciliation for iniquity, and on that cross provided a place where God and the sinner may meet in peace. He has taken out of the way that which hindered God from having any dealings with us; and thus it is now as righteous and glorifying a thing in God to *pardon*, as before it was to *punish* transgressors. He has magnified the law and made it honourable,<sup>2</sup> so that the dishonour we had done to that law by our disobedience, is far more than made up for by the glory which he has put upon it through his perfect and divine obedience. Christ’s work is thus a full treasure-house of every thing the sinner can need or desire. In it there is full provision for pardon, for cleansing, for renewing, for eternal life, for holiness, for complete restoration to the image, the character, the kingdom of God, and to every blessing included in the term *salvation*, that is, to the complete reversal of and deliverance from every thing which made us *lost*, and the full bestowal of every blessing from the hand of God, which a *saved* condition can possibly im-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 16—18.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah xlii. 21.

ply, from the lowest degree of mere deliverance from hell, up to the highest glories of which a created being can be heir. (4.) He is "able to save," because of the offices he sustains. As a priest he saves from sin; as a mediator he brings us to God; as an intercessor he pleads our cause; as the shepherd and bishop of souls he seeks and saves the lost, as well as watches over them when found; as Messiah he anoints us with the Holy Spirit, bestowing gifts on men, even on the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell among them; as a prophet he teaches the ignorant, and makes the foolish wise unto salvation; as the captain of our salvation he fights our battles and leads the array against our enemies; as a king he rules in us and over us, making us more than conquerors over earth and hell,—over the power of this ensnaring flesh with all its deadly lusts which war against the soul,—over this gay seducing world with all its pomp, and pride, and bravery,—over principalities and powers, and all the banded legions of the prince of darkness.

2. *Christ is a Saviour to the uttermost.* He is not only *able* to save, but *infinitely able*. It is the ability of Omnipotence. It is the ability of one who has all power in heaven, in earth, in hell. It is the ability of one who has shed infinitely precious blood, who has paid an infinitely precious ransom, who has laid down an infinitely precious life, in order that there might be salvation to the uttermost. It is the ability of one who has accomplished an infinitely glorious work, and thereby made infinite provision for every thing that sinners could require. It is the ability of one who has not only mercy and grace upon his side, but righteousness, holiness, and truth. Every infinite perfection is now upon the side of salvation. A Saviour's death did this. Before that they were against it. Nothing therefore can be beyond the reach of a Saviour such as this. No sinner upon earth, no sinner on this side of hell can be beyond his power to save. His salvation goes to the very uttermost extremity of human ruin, to "the very ends of the earth," up to the very gate of hell.

(1.) This salvation is "to the uttermost" with respect to a sinner's state and character. It goes to the very extremity of ruin and death. There is no degree of guilt for which it has not provided a full pardon. There are no sins too many,—there is no burden too heavy for a salvation like this. Though our sins be truly infinite in number; though they be more than the hairs of our head, or the sands on the sea-shore, or the drops of the ocean, or



the leaves of the forest, or the stars of heaven, or all of these multiplied together, yet still this salvation goes infinitely above and beyond them all. Though they be awfully heinous and aggravated, like scarlet or crimson, unspeakably abominable and loathsome, nay, black as hell, yet still this salvation goes far beyond them. Nor can any sinner be too vile and polluted to be saved. He may be sunk deepest of all in the horrible pit and the miry clay; his soul may be a cage of unclean birds, hateful and filthy beyond human conception, yet still there is salvation for him here. Here is blood even to cleanse such a soul, nay, to make it whiter than the snow. No soul is too vile for Jesus to cleanse.<sup>1</sup> Nor can any soul be too dead for Jesus to quicken. They may be lying in the deepest grave of trespasses and sins, yet the arm of Jesus can reach down to them and pluck them from it. The power of Jesus can awaken the soul that is sunk in the deepest slumbers of spiritual death.<sup>2</sup> Let no one then say, My soul is so dead, that I despair of its ever being quickened. Here is life for the deadest; life to the uttermost. No degree of death is beyond the power of Him who is the resurrection and the life. To speak thus despondingly of your deadness is not humility, but presumption. It is limiting the power and grace of Jesus. It is saying that he is *not* able to save to the uttermost,—that there are some states of death beyond his reach! Neither is there any heart too hard for Jesus to soften. It matters not how hard it be. It may be like iron, that nothing will break; it may be like adamant, that nothing will melt. It may be both of these together, or far more so than any figure can give you the least idea of. But still it is not too hard for Him. Neither is there any soul too needy, too poor, too full of wants for Him. It matters not how manifold be the wants, how deep the poverty, how great the need. Still he is able to save to the uttermost; and that surely is enough to assure the very neediest that there is abundant supply for them. His fulness is the fulness of God, and that is infinite. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” And he himself thus graciously addresses the needy soul, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.” None are too empty for Jesus to fill; and that in no scanty measure, but even to overflowing; “he that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.” Neither is there any soul too miserable for Him to make

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah i. 18; 1 Cor. vi. 9—11; 1 John i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 25; Eph. ii. 1.

perfectly blessed. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He has peace for the most troubled, rest for the weariest, light for the darkest, joy for the most sorrowful, calm for the most tempest-tost, perfect blessedness for the most wretched of all! He gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Truly he is a Saviour to the uttermost!

Take your station on the highest eminence of earth, which commands the widest prospect that man's eye can reach. Look around on this fallen earth. Look backward on the condition of sin and wretchedness in which its millions have been involved for these six thousand years; look forward and conceive the guilt in which it is yet to be more fearfully sunk ere the day of its glory come. Look on every side of you in this present generation. See the pollution, the guilt, the abominations, the enormities with which it is flooded. Take a wider circle, and conceive what lie beyond these,—the crimes, the atrocities, perpetrated in secret, unseen by the eye of man, deeds done in darkness, and fit only to be named in darkness,—every thing conceivable on this side of hell. Take a yet wider circle, and imagine, if that be possible, how much more than all that, God's eye discerns, and God's soul abhors in what has been done and is yet doing on the surface of this fallen earth. Take the very widest possible circle of human guilt, the deepest mire of mortal sin; and imagine in addition to these, all possible difficulties and hindrances; still beyond that widest circle,—yea, infinitely beyond the farthest that man's guilt has compassed, is the power of Jesus to save! For his is salvation to the uttermost; his is the salvation of God. The sinner may indeed have gone to the very extremity of guilt,—to the very ends of the earth in his wanderings from God. Yea, he may have gone to the very gates of hell, and be knocking for admittance there. He may be a brand already set on fire of hell; yet even from thence the arm and power of Jesus can pluck him; even from the gates of hell can the outstretched hand of Jesus save!<sup>1</sup>

(2.) This salvation is to the uttermost in respect to the *completeness* of the salvation. It is a *complete* deliverance that Jesus brings to the soul. The first thing he does is to justify the sinner; and this he does at once and entirely, so soon as we believe in his name. Our acceptance with the Father, through his beloved Son, is a perfect and im-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1—13; Zech. iii. 2; 1 Tim. i. 13—16.

mediate acceptance, without any reserve. It is not partially or by halves, that he forgives. He forgives fully, and without limitation; so that not so much as one sin remains unpardoned. He forgives not merely until seven times, or until seventy times seven, or even until ten thousand times ten thousand, but without number or bound. Whether our sins be known or unknown, felt or unfelt, remembered or forgotten, he freely forgives all to the uttermost. And as he forgives entirely, so he sanctifies wholly. Whatever be the hindrances or the enemies in our way, he will perfect that which he begins. Whatever have been our past lives, the sins or crimes of manhood, still he saves "to the uttermost," so as entirely to undo the evil of our former ways, and wash away the pollution of our former sins. Hence the salvation of one sinner is as complete as that of another, though the former may have lived much longer, and gone far deeper into sin than the latter. The salvation of Rahab the harlot was as complete as that of Joshua, her deliverer; nor would her long life of sin make her peace less perfect or secure than his, though perhaps he had known the Lord from his youth. The salvation of Manasseh, whose sins, both in their own enormity, and by their aggravations, seem absolutely without a parallel, was as complete as that of his godly father Hezekiah, or his inspired teacher Isaiah. The salvation of Paul, the blasphemer and persecutor, was not less complete than that of Timothy, who from his youth had sought after God. Nothing but an infinite salvation could have reached the case of such vile transgressors; but when it did reach them, it left nothing imperfect. It purged their consciences and cleansed their souls from guilt, even such as theirs. It brought them a perfect, not a partial or doubtful peace. It gave them as complete an assurance of God's love, and as sure a consciousness of reconciliation with him, as it could give to those whose past life had been stained with no such outward abominations. It preserved unruffled the steadfast calm of the soul, even in the full remembrance of all the enormities of other days. Oh, what a salvation must this be, that could accomplish all this so perfectly, even for the chief of sinners!

And then, all this is *eternal*. It is not a temporary salvation; neither is it one that can change or give way hereafter. No. It is eternally secure; for he who commenced it, ever liveth to maintain and perpetuate it. He preserves each saved soul, by his mighty power, unto his coming, that then he may present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Nay, their very dust to him is dear.

Their body as well as their soul he saves, raising it up and making it like unto his own glorious body, that he may place them altogether perfect, completely saved, upon his throne in the day when he returns to reign.<sup>1</sup> And throughout eternity these saved ones remain as trophies of a Saviour's grace and power; an undecaying memorial of the redeeming love of him who "is able to save to the uttermost." No stain of former sin can reappear upon their spotless raiment; nor can all the infinite abomination of their former ways prevent them from shining in their perfect brightness as the sons of light—it may be, the most resplendent of all! No returning mists of earth can ever again overcast their everlasting sunshine, or cloud the pure azure of their sky. No remembrance of guilt can ever draw one darkening shadow over their brow of light. No consciousness that they are the very sinners who were once in the horrible pit and in the miry clay, can check their notes of joy, or do ought but add to the gladness as well as the loudness of the new song they sing. How truly is all this "salvation to the uttermost"—salvation that knows no bound—no end!

3. *They that come unto Christ are saved.* He saves those who come unto God by him, or who come unto himself, for both statements are common in Scripture. Those whom he saves are those who come unto the Father through him as the way, who consent to take him as the way to God; to recognise him as "the way, the truth, and the life"—the new and living way into the presence of God. He saves none else. Not but that he has the *power* to save millions more, even of those who refuse to come; yet still he saves none who remain away. Their remaining away, their refusing to come unto the Father through him, seals their condemnation. To save such would be to proclaim his own work unnecessary, to declare that he had died in vain. Therefore he saves none who reject him as their Saviour; he leaves them to die in their sins. He saves none who persist in coming to God by ways of their own, who seek life by methods of their own, who try to obtain pardon by doings of their own. He saves none who stand afar off, and turn away from God. None of these he saves, so long as they remain such. It is the coming ones that he saves; those who consent to take him and him only as the access into the holiest—the way unto the Father. Whosoever then persists in taking his own way of coming to God, cannot be saved. Whosoever comes without this Mediator or chooses another, cannot be saved. It is our taking

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 27; Col. i. 22; Jude 24.



him as the appointed way to God, and drawing near by that way, that saves us!<sup>1</sup>

The special object of the apostle in making this statement seems to be to show that Christ is so infinitely able to save, that none can possibly bring to him a case too desperate—a case beyond his skill and power to cure. Such is his power, that if sinners will only bring the case to him, however helpless it may seem, still it must yield to his touch. All who will only put their case into his hands will find in him an infinitely sufficient Saviour. And yet how many are seeking to save themselves, before they come to him to be saved! How many refuse to come as they are, and try to do something, however little, in the way of saving themselves, before they count themselves entitled to come to him for the rest. How many think they must begin the work, and then come to him to end it. They think it would be presumption to bring a soul so diseased as theirs, a heart so hard and dead as theirs. They count it humility to stay away, or at least to come doubting and fearing. They do not see that it is not humility but presumption to stay away, or to come doubting, as if he to whom they were coming were either unable or unwilling to receive and save them.

Whosoever thou art then, only COME, and thou shalt be saved. Come unto God by him! Whatever be your sin, only come! Whatever be your unworthiness, only come! Whatever be your hardness of heart, only come! Whatever be the peculiarity of your case, only come! Bring your oppressed soul to him! Bring your hard heart to him! Bring your troubled conscience to him! Do not stand afar off. Do not try to be your own physician. Do not try to make yourself better before you come. In the very state in which this message finds you, come! There is infinite fulness in him. There is infinite provision for you in that fulness. There is infinite love in him. There is infinite willingness to save you. He sends you this message; he stretches out his arm; he beckons with his hand; he lifts up his gracious voice to you, saying, I am the way, and the truth and the life—him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.

4. *Christ's intercession is the pledge of his infinite ability to save.* He ever liveth to make intercession for us. It is for this that he *liveth*. It is for this that he is exalted to the throne of the majesty in the heavens. And this is the assurance to us of his being able to save unto the uttermost; for it is by this intercession that he carries

<sup>1</sup> John x. 9; xiv. 6; Eph. ii. 18; Heb. x. 19, 20.

on our salvation. His work on earth, as the sacrifice, wrought out the atonement from which salvation flows; and his work in heaven, as the advocate with the Father, carries on and applies that work. On earth he finished his work as the bearer of sin, thereby taking it out of the way, and opening the access to God. In heaven he is now seated to effect the reconciliation for which he had prepared the way,—to *introduce* to the Father those that approach to his name. Let us briefly consider what this intercession implies.

(1.) *He intercedes by presenting his sacrifice before the throne.* He appears in heaven as “the Lamb that was slain.”<sup>1</sup> As such the Father beholds him and is well pleased. And thus by his presenting himself and his complete work before the Father, intercession is made by him, silent yet resistless. His appearance pleads,—his attitude pleads,—his blood pleads,—his obedience pleads,—his sacrifice pleads. Just as the altar might be said to plead for every one who laid his hands upon its horns, so the sacrifice of Jesus pleads for every one who lays his hand on him. Just as the Lamb, though silent, pleaded effectually for him who brought it as an offering, so the Lamb of God pleads for every one who will take him as their offering, and lay their sins on him.

(2.) *He intercedes by presenting HIMSELF in our name.* “He appears in the presence of God for us.”<sup>2</sup> He was our substitute on earth, and he is our *representative* in heaven. Hence God sees us *in him*, hears us in him, deals with us in him. By presenting his blood, he obtains forgiveness for us; but by presenting *himself*, his infinitely glorious self, he does far more,—he obtains for us every thing that belongs to him. Every thing that *we* say is heard of God as if *he* had said it; every thing that we ask for is bestowed by the Father as if he had asked it; our petitions are counted as his petitions; our voice ascends acceptable in the Father’s ears, as if it were the voice of his beloved Son. Thus entirely does he *represent* us, and by so doing plead for us irresistibly. He appears in the presence of God for us; and by so appearing carries on his mighty intercession. He invites us to come, and be represented by him. He sees sinners coming to God upon their own footing, and he invites them to come on his. He sees men vainly presenting their prayers before God on the ground of some personal title of their own, and he asks them no longer to attempt such folly, but to consent to take him as

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ix. 24.

their representative, assuring them that if they will but do so, all his infinite merit and acceptableness with the Father shall plead for them! O sinners, self-righteous ones, self-trusting ones, come and be thus represented and interceded for by him! His holiness will plead infinitely more *for* you, than all your unholiness can plead *against* you. His glorious righteousness will plead infinitely more *for* you than all your miserable unrighteousness can plead *against* you. The excellent beauty of his person will be a far stronger plea in your favour, than all the loathsome deformity of your own person can be against you!

(3.) *He intercedes by pleading for us.* When he was on earth, he thus pleaded, and doubtless he has not ceased to do the same gracious office in heaven. He pleaded for Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."<sup>1</sup> Thus he took up Peter's case; thus he prayed that his faith might be upheld. And as he did to Peter on earth, so doubtless he does in heaven for those who come unto God by him. He takes notice of their case. His eye is always upon them. He sees their fainting faith. He marks their struggles with unbelief,—struggles to which no human eye is witness, struggles maintained in the solitude of their closet, and expressed only by the tear, the groan, the sigh. He sees when they would fain come to him, and Satan keeps them back or casts them down, or whispers malignant doubts; and seeing all these, he takes their case into his hand and pleads for them with God. How comforting to believers to remember this! How encouraging to those who are but seeking the way to God perhaps in fear and darkness, to see how ready this divine Intercessor is to take up their case and plead in their behalf! Again, in the seventeenth chapter of John we have a specimen of Christ's intercession on earth, which is well fitted to give us a right idea of what it must be in heaven. Take such passages as these—"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." Again, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."<sup>2</sup> These are some of Christ's pleadings on earth; and oh! how consoling, how animating to think that these are still his pleadings in heaven! With such an advocate above,<sup>3</sup> what can we fear? Whatever be the feebleness, the imperfection of our pleadings here, either for ourselves or others, his intercession is always perfect and prevailing. And it

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 31, 32.<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 17 24.<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 1.

is *his* intercession, that is our confidence and hope. If he plead for us, who can plead against us? O sinners, come to him! Come and be pleaded for by this divine intercessor. Come put your case into the hands of this divine advocate! Allow him to plead for you! Do not continue to manage your own cause. Intrust it to him and all shall be well.

(4.) *He intercedes by presenting our prayers.* It is he and he only that presents our prayers to the Father; and being presented by him they are accepted and answered. As our High Priest, he both “bears the iniquity of our holy things,” and procures acceptance for them.<sup>1</sup> Our prayers must pass through his hands ere they can reach the Father. As they leave our lips they are impure and earthly, being breathed from polluted hearts; but forthwith he takes hold of them, strips them of their impurities, purges away their imperfections, and presents them as a perfect offering to God. The hearts they come from are corrupt and vile; the desires they contain are cold, lifeless, wandering; the words in which they are expressed are poor and feeble; each petition seems to plead against us; yet still, being presented by him, they are well-pleasing even in the eyes of Him who cannot look upon iniquity. Hence prayer is likened to sweet incense, and in heaven the four and twenty elders have in their hands “golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of saints.”<sup>2</sup> Thus also Jesus as our High Priest stands with his golden censer full of incense, to “offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne.”<sup>3</sup> Into that censer he calls on us to put our prayers. He stretches out his hand; he lets down that censer to earth; he brings it to our very side; he asks us to put in our prayers! Then he will draw up that censer; and, fragrant with rich incense, he will present them before the throne. How apt are we to overlook this! How prone either to present our prayers without any censer at all, or to make censers of our own! How apt to look aside from Jesus, even when looking up to God! How apt to undervalue the efficacy of this divine censer, and to cherish doubts whether our petitions may find their way safely to the throne! How apt to make censers of our own, and to attempt with these to approach the Father! How apt, for instance, are we to make our acceptance depend upon our earnestness, and say, “Alas! we are so cold in prayer, how can we expect an answer;” or, on the other hand, to congratulate ourselves, and take courage from an opposite state of

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxviii. 38.<sup>2</sup> Rev. v. 8.<sup>3</sup> Rev. viii. 3.



feeling, saying, "Ah, we have been earnest, we have had much enlargement, surely we shall be accepted." What is all this but just making a censer of our earnestness; forgetting that it is not our frame in prayer, but the censer into which it is put, that secures its acceptance! The most fervent petition that ever rose from earth needs this censer with its incense, to prevent its being an abomination to God; and the feeblest cry that ever left a sinner's trembling lips needs *no more!* O sinners! put in your prayers into this censer. The High Priest reaches it towards you, he presents it at your side; put in your prayers and they shall be heard! Ye who have never prayed before, bring your first petition here, and *even you* are sure of acceptance! Ye who have been praying in doubt, lodge your petitions here and cease to doubt. That golden censer is enough to remove your fears, and give you the full assurance of faith in drawing near to the mercy seat!

Such then is the great High Priest of our profession! Such is Jesus! Able to save to the uttermost! Ever living to intercede! Mighty in saving—all-prevalent in interceding! How secure, how blessed is the state of those who have come unto God through him! How great the encouragement for sinners to come unto God through him! He is infinitely able and willing to save you! Do not stay away from him; but come at once, come now, come boldly, come without doubting, come as you are, and he will save you; he will undertake your cause, and all shall be well.

**SALVATION TO THE UTTERMOST!** This is the message we bring. Salvation for the vilest, the guiltiest, the most wretched of all. Salvation for every sinner on this side of hell! None can say their case is too bad, for it is salvation to the uttermost; and where is the sinner that is beyond the uttermost—beyond that which *God* calls the uttermost. Lost ones, come and be saved! Chief of sinners, come! Prodigals, rebels, wanderers, come! *Whosoever will*, let him come and be saved!

KELSO, *February* 1843.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.

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*"Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness,"* PSALM cxliii. 10.

*"The love of the Spirit,"* ROM. xv. 30.

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NOTHING can be more necessary for a sinner's peace and holiness, than his fully knowing the character of that God with whom he has to do. The more perfectly we become acquainted with him, the more do we joy in him, and the more are we conformed to his likeness. In his word God has fully revealed his character. He has therein told us what he is. Especially in the living Word, that is, in Christ, do we learn the character of God. He is the perfect expression and manifestation of that character. But then, this character belongs equally to all the three persons in the Trinity. What is true of one is equally true of all. "God is holy," and this means that the Father is holy, the Son is holy, the Spirit is holy. "God is light;" and this intimates that the Father is light, the Son is light, the Spirit is light. "God is love;" and this declares that the Father is love, the Son is love, the Spirit is love. We are accustomed to admit this of the Father and the Son; but we are less used to consider it as equally applicable to the Holy Spirit. Thus we have lost sight of the Spirit's love; a love as real, as true, as tender, as infinite, as gracious, as that of the Father and the Son.

We are apt to think of the Spirit as a mere influence, like the air we breathe, diffusing itself around, and operating upon us by a vague and indirect process of contact. So long as we do so, our ideas of the Spirit must be confused and unsatisfactory. Till we realize his *personality*, it is impossible that we can rightly acknowledge him in any of his divine perfections; more especially his *love*. A mere influence cannot be felt as a thing either loving or loveable. Hence till the Spirit's personality is kept in view, his distinct and peculiar love cannot be rightly understood or realized; and the personality of the Spirit's love must no more be lost sight of, than the personality of the love of the Father, or the love of the Son.

Again, even when recognising the Spirit as a person, we are apt to dwell exclusively on his power, or wisdom, or holiness, and thereby forget or overlook his *love*. It is true we can never magnify too mightily any of his divine excellencies, yet still we must not allow one to supplant another. We must not suffer the power or the holiness of the Spirit to withdraw our eyes from his *love*, a love which is as infinite and glorious, as his holiness or his power.

Again, when we acknowledge his grace and condescension in coming down into this fallen world to fulfil his errand of mercy, we are too prone to think of this merely as an act of obedience to the Father's will in sending him. When seen thus alone, it is the Father's love more than the Spirit's that is recognised. But let us remember that when he comes into this world and into these souls of ours, it is not merely because sent by the Father and the Son, but because he *loves* to come. It is not merely because he is pledged in covenant to accomplish the work, but because he *loves* to do it. He works not merely because it is his office to convince, and comfort, and sanctify, but because he *loves* to do so. It is love that brings him down from heaven into a world like ours,—free, unbidden love, love to the lost, love as amazing and immeasurable as that of the Son of God, who though he was rich for our sakes became poor. The Father is said to have loved us with an everlasting love; so has the Spirit. The Son is said to have rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and to have had his delights with the sons of men; and the same may be said of the Spirit. Every fact, or declaration, or promise, that proves the love of God, proves the love of the Spirit.

Again, we are apt to suppose, that because he is called emphatically the *Holy* Spirit, therefore holiness is so peculiarly his attribute, that it is not proper to ascribe such peculiar love to him. But there is nothing in this characteristic of holiness to exclude the idea of love. Surely no one would say that because he is called the Holy Spirit, the Father or the Son is less holy than he? If love therefore be so perfectly consistent with holiness in them, it cannot be less so in him. There is such a thing as holy love to the unholy, and it would appear as if this love were strong and intense in proportion to the *holiness* of the being who loves. The Spirit's infinite holiness gives him such a view of the misery of an unholy soul, as makes him yearn with compassionate love over such. His infinite holiness makes him long to see them delivered from their sin, and

made holy as he is holy. Holy love yearns over the unholy. Holy love longs to save the lost. Holy love strives to deliver the unholy from the awful misery of a sinful state, and to replace them in the blessedness of divine purity, and the perfect image of God.

Again, we may imagine that it is the work of Christ, as the sacrifice for sin, that has brought the Spirit down to us. Now, it is true, that had it not been for that work, the Holy Spirit could not have come down to dwell amid unholy beings. Had the work of Christ not satisfied divine righteousness, and glorified the holiness of the Godhead, even when dealing with sinners, the Spirit never could have come down at all. Yet the work of Christ did not create or cause the Spirit's love. There was love in his heart to sinners before, just as it was in the Father's, but then it was pent up; it could not flow out till this righteous way was opened, this holy channel prepared through which it might flow freely down to us, unstrained and unobstructed. The Holy Spirit could have no dealings with an unholy soul, till the blood had been shed; still there was love in him before,—love which led him joyfully to undertake his part in redeeming man, love which led him to prepare a body for the Son of God, on which our sins might be laid. The Father so loved the world as to give his Son. The Son so loved the world as to give himself. And the Spirit so loved the world as freely and gladly to come down into it, and there carry on his gracious work in the sinner's soul.

But let us consider some of the proofs of the Spirit's love. These are manifold. "If we would speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." How precious are his thoughts to us. "How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty." Let us attend to a few of them. And may he be our gracious Teacher in unfolding the things concerning himself.

I. *The Spirit's love shows itself in his names.*—He is called by many names, and set forth to us by many figures expressive of his tenderness and love. He is called "the good Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> thereby declaring to us his loving-kindness and compassion. He is called the "Spirit of grace,"<sup>2</sup> to show us that he is merciful and gracious, full of the same free love to sinners as the Father and the Son. He is called the "Spirit of adoption,"<sup>3</sup> because he imprints on

<sup>1</sup> Neh. ix. 20; Psal. cxliii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5, 6.



us his own divine affections and sympathies, revealing to us the Father's mind and heart, creating in us all filial confidence, and teaching us to say, Abba, Father. He is called the "Spirit of liberty,"<sup>1</sup> because he undoes our heavy yoke, and breaks our grievous fetters, possessing our whole souls with the blessed consciousness of divine liberty, delivering us from the bondage of fear and sin, making us "free indeed." He is called "the Comforter;"<sup>2</sup> "the helper of our infirmities,"<sup>3</sup> "the earnest of the inheritance,"<sup>4</sup> "the Spirit of love."<sup>5</sup> Then, again, he is set forth to us under the figure of "rain and dew,"<sup>6</sup> mild and refreshing; as the "oil of gladness,"<sup>7</sup> because of the overflowing joy which he imparts; as a dove,<sup>8</sup> because of his being so gentle, so loving, so peaceful, so tender, so easily wounded and grieved away. Such are some of the Spirit's names of love! They are poor indeed, and feeble to express the vast reality of deep love that is in his bosom. Yet they do give us sweet and precious glimpses of his tender love.

II. *The Spirit's love shows itself in the Scriptures which he himself has written.*—The word came to us not from man, neither by man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So that in these Scriptures it is especially the Spirit that speaks to us. It was he who wrote them. It is his language that they speak. It is his mind they breathe. It is his feelings that they embody. A man's writings show us his mind and heart: so do the Scriptures reveal to us the mind of the Holy Spirit. And what is the feeling that pervades them?—It is love. What is their tone?—It is gentleness and kindness. He who wrote them must have had a heart overflowing with love. No one can mistake the feeling which pervades the whole from beginning to end. They breathe the tenderest compassion throughout. Love to sinners shines out in every page, and pours itself along every line. All is holiness, yet all is love. The words are the words of truth and wisdom, yet they are the words of love. Hatred of sin is stamped every where, yet love to the sinner is as deeply engraven on every leaf. Every invitation is the expression of the Spirit's love. Every call is the call of the Spirit's love. Every word of grace is from the Spirit's love. Every word of comfort is from the Spirit's love. All the words in season for the weary are from the Spirit's love. It is he who saith, "Come, now, and let us

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 17.<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 16. <sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 26.<sup>4</sup> Eph. i. 13. <sup>5</sup> 2 Tim. i. 7. <sup>6</sup> Psal. lxxviii. 9. <sup>7</sup> Hos. xiv. 15.<sup>8</sup> Psal. xlv. 7. <sup>9</sup> Matt. iii. 16.

reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." It is he who saith, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." It is he who saith, "thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." It is he who saith, "return ye backsliding children." It is he who saith to the weak, "be strong,"—to the sorrowful, "rejoice,"—to the troubled, "comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." Oh how full is all Scripture of the love of the Spirit! It breathes like sweet fragrance over every page. It is like ointment poured forth. Were we to read Scripture in this light, how much more sweetness might we find in it. How much more of winning attractive power should we discover in all its words. We have often wondered at their weight and wisdom, but this would teach us to wonder still more at their love. This would take away all seeming coldness or repetition. It would fill every word with a meaning of love unknown, unimagined before. We should thus get fuller access to the mind of the Spirit;—a deeper insight into his gracious heart. We should learn not merely the grace contained in a promise, but we should be led more fully into the heart of the promiser. And we should thus see how the Spirit's love gives vent to itself in these sacred pages. The Father's love found its vent in his gift of the Son. The Son's love found vent to itself in the offering up of himself as our sin-bearer. But nowhere does the love of the Spirit get such full vent to itself as in the Scriptures which he has inspired. It is here that he pours forth all the treasures of his love;—love to the lost, the guilty, the wanderer, the backslider, the rebel,—love without measure and without change,—love that is not regulated according to the worthiness of the object loved, or the amount of love expected in return, but love that embraces the unworthy, and those who requite nothing but hatred for love, enmity for friendship. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."<sup>1</sup>

III. *The Spirit's love shows itself in his anointing the Son of God for his work of love.*—The "oil of gladness" with which he was anointed, was from the Spirit of love. It was by this loving Spirit that he was anointed to "preach the gospel to the poor."<sup>2</sup> It was by this loving Spirit that he was "sent to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 7, 11.<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 18.

the acceptable year of the Lord; to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."<sup>1</sup> It was by the anointing of this same Spirit that he was fitted for the gracious office to which he was appointed of the Father, as described to us in another passage of the same prophet. Speaking of him as his servant, his chosen one on whom his soul delighted, the Father says, "I have put my Spirit upon him." And what is the result? "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."<sup>2</sup> It was by the anointing of the same Spirit that he has "the tongue of the learned that he should know to speak a word in season to him that is weary." All the heavenly gifts and graces of the Redeemer's character are declared to be wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, with which he was filled "without measure." His especial fitness and fulness for his mighty work of love are ascribed to the indwelling of the Spirit of love. Thus was he fairer than the children of men; grace was poured into his lips;<sup>3</sup> and hence never man spake like him, and men wondered at "the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." As it was by the coming down and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, that he was formed in the womb, perfectly holy in soul and body, so it was by the indwelling of the same holy and loving Spirit that he was anointed for his work of love; and it was "through the eternal Spirit that he in love offered himself without spot to God" for us.<sup>4</sup> Thus the grace of Christ teaches us the grace of the Spirit. In the love of the Saviour there shines forth the love of the Spirit.

Besides, what love to sinners is there manifested by the Spirit in his thus preparing the Son of God as the sacrifice for sin! It was love in the Father to send the Son,—to consent that he should suffer so much for us. But is there not the same deep love in the Holy Spirit, to undertake such a work as that of preparing a lamb for the burnt-offering,—binding the victim for the slaughter! What but infinite love is this? It was in one sense indeed a glorious work, for it was preparing a vessel for containing the full glory of Godhead in the form of a man. Yet it was an awful work to prepare that well-beloved Son for bearing all the divine wrath against sin,—presenting him, if we may so speak, to the Father, to receive those

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lxi. 3.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah xlii. 1, 3.<sup>3</sup> Psal. xlv. 2.<sup>4</sup> Heb. ix. 14.

vials of wrath which should have been poured out on us! What deep love is here!

And what condescending love to sinners, to frame so many types and figures under the law, by which to show forth the Saviour's character and work. It was by the Spirit that Bezaleel and Aholiab were fitted for making the various utensils of the tabernacle.<sup>1</sup> It was by the same Spirit that all the vessels of service were devised, and all the ceremonies ordained by which the fulness of a Saviour's work was to be shown forth to sinners; by which the ignorant were to be taught the knowledge of redemption. What love is thus manifested in all the pains thus taken by the divine Spirit to leave nothing, however minute, untold, by which the sinner's eye might be directed to the Lamb of God!

And again what love was it in the Spirit, to record in the Book of Psalms the tears and groans of the Son of God!—to preserve on record the hidden life, the secret feelings of the Man of Sorrows, when bearing the Father's wrath for us! How painful is it for us to record the agonies of a beloved friend. We would rather forget them. Yet for love's sake we might be induced to record them for the benefit of others. So is it with the Spirit. For love's sake he has put the tears of the Son of God "into his bottle,"<sup>2</sup> and told us "all his wanderings."<sup>3</sup> Had it not been for the Spirit's love in writing such a record as this, we should never have known the depths of that sorrow that was in the Redeemer's heart. What love then does the saddest word in all that book show forth, love not only of the Saviour, but of the Spirit too!

And then, what love to testify of Christ and his finished work! This is his especial office now. He testifies of Christ. He glorifies Christ. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us.<sup>4</sup> And all this is not only out of his love to the Saviour, but out of his love to the sinner. Not merely because he delights to see Jesus honoured, but because he longs to see the sinner saved! How deep, how vast, how free must be this "love of the Spirit."

IV. *The Spirit's love shows itself by his work in the hearts of sinners.*—Now that the work of Jesus has been finished, he comes forth to do his office of love. And though he be the "holy one," he yet refuses not to work in the hearts of the unholy. He comes to us. He speaks to us. He strives



with us. He draws us. He awakens us. He convinces us of sin. He quickens us. He opens our eyes. He leads us to the blood of sprinkling. Though he is resisted, grieved, vexed, quenched, he does not leave us, nor cease his efforts. For years he continues striving with the soul in his infinite love, unwilling to give it up, unwilling that it should perish. What hatred he meets with, yet he bears it all! What coldness and contempt he meets with, yet he bears it all! He would fain obtain entrance into the soul. He would fain deliver the captive one. And in seeking to accomplish this, he submits to every form of resistance, and enmity, and scorn. In his love he bears it all, rather than lose the sinner! And all this, though he be "the holy one," though his name is emphatically "the HOLY Spirit." Sinner, think what his love must be! Think what his long-suffering must be! To strive so earnestly and so long in seeking to win us to life! To cherish so fondly a serpent's brood! To deal so graciously with souls so full of hatred! So condescendingly, so patiently to continue his strivings, notwithstanding all our perversity and stubbornness! So graciously to seek to draw our hearts to the love of God, teaching us to love, who by nature know only how to hate! "Herein is love, not that we loved Him but that he loved us."

V. *The Spirit's love shows itself by his work in the hearts of saints.*—It is not less marvellous in the latter than in the former. True he has won the soul. He has found entrance, and taken up his abode in it. Yet still how much has he to bear! How much has he still to encounter of resistance, and coldness, and unbelief, which are not the less grievous because the heart in which they are manifested is one which we can call his own. No coldness however, can chill his love; no unbelief can make him cease his workings. He meets with daily repulses, yet he ceases not. So unchangeable, so unquenchable is his love. Truly "many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it." Think what he does for saints. He leads them into all truth.<sup>1</sup> He sheds the love of God abroad in their hearts.<sup>2</sup> He enables them to persevere.<sup>3</sup> He mortifies corruption in them.<sup>4</sup> He fills them with joy.<sup>5</sup> He reveals the things of Christ.<sup>6</sup> He helps their infirmities in prayer.<sup>7</sup> In the discharge of this last duty he is spoken of as the Intercessor. He intercedes within, just as Christ intercedes without. He stands at our side to prompt us, to suggest our prayers, to

<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 13. <sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 5. <sup>3</sup> 2Tim. i. 14. <sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thess. i. 6. <sup>6</sup> John xvi. 14. <sup>7</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

draw forth our desires. Yea, he comes into us ; he takes possession of our heart ; he identifies himself entirely with us, and thus he mingles his voice with ours, his cries with ours. He makes our organs of feeling and speech the instrument for expressing His own desires, making His prayers to seem as ours,—seconding and enforcing our feeble petitions with his mighty cries. And often when we are praying in our poor imperfect way, in wandering and weakness, he comes in and lifts us up, and kindles the flame within. Then it is as if we were overpowered with the intensity of our longings, our whole soul goes up in vehement intercession, till human language gives way beneath the pressure, and nought remains but the unutterable groan. How vast his love, thus to put forth such power in us, in spite of all our continued resistance, and unbelief, and sin !

Let us learn then to love him in return for this love of his, so marvellous, so free. Surely he has claims upon our love, for having loved so much. So long-suffering, so loving, so gentle ! Let us no more grieve him, no more disappoint him. Let us allow him to take us by the hand and lead us onward, whithersoever he will. He will show us the path of life. He will be our strength in weakness, our light in darkness, our joy in sorrow, our comforter in the day of trouble. Let us not thrust away his hand, or meet his love with coldness. Whom have we on earth as our guide in the Saviour's absence, until he come again, but the Spirit the comforter ? " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."<sup>1</sup>

Let anxious souls lay these things to heart. To them the doctrine of the Spirit's love ought to be unspeakably precious. He who is working in them is love. He who is convincing them of sin is love. He who is seeking to draw them to God is love. It is a hand of power that is at work in them, but it is also a hand of love. This physician is as loving as he is skilful. Whence then so many doubts, so many hard thoughts of God ? Will the Father who so loved us as to give his Son for us, turn his ear away from us. Will the Son who so loved us as to die for us, cast us out ? Will that loving Spirit who has so long been striving with us, and so long seeking to draw us to God, will he overlook our suit, or deal unkindly with us now ? How can they who know his name fail to put their trust in him ? How can they who understand his love suspect his willingness to bless ? Did we but know the full

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 30.

character of that God with whom we have to do, the Father as love, the Son as love, the Spirit as love, should not our doubting cease? You mourn over an impenitent heart. Does the Spirit not love to soften it? You complain of inward deadness and insensibility. Does he not love to make you feel? You cry out because of unbelief. Does he not love to deliver you from that evil heart of unbelief? You tell us of the power the world has over you. Does he not love to make you spiritually minded, to set your affections on things above? You complain of your ignorance. Does he not love to teach you? You say you realize so little of the glory of Christ and his righteousness. Does he not love to remove the veil from your eyes, to show you the glory of the Saviour, to unfold to you in all its infinite dimensions and spotless purity, the robe of his perfect righteousness? You mourn because you have so little of his indwelling life and power, quickening and sanctifying you. Does he not love to come in all his fullness; at the same time showing you, that it is not his own work in you, but the Redeemer's work for you, that is your peace and hope. You complain that you have so little of childlike confidence and love towards your heavenly Father. Does he not love to pour that love into you, enlarging your straitened souls, unloosing your stammering tongue, and teaching you with childlike lip and heart to say, Abba Father.

You tell us of your doubts and fears; and you tell us moreover that these arise, not from any suspicion of God's willingness to save you, but from want of evidence as to your own progress in the divine life. Now in opposition to this we assure you that your doubts do arise from not understanding the *grace* of God. Did you but know the meaning of grace, your fears would cease. And it is this that the Spirit in his love is seeking to teach you. He wants to show you that there is such a thing as *free love* to sinners. And for this purpose he is seeking to strip you of every plea for any thing good about you. His object is to teach you that there is not one single thought in you, but what God condemns. Then he shows you that grace takes for granted that you are utterly ruined, and that if it did not do so it would not be grace at all. If it supposed that there was any good thing in you, it would not be grace. If it supposed that before it could reach your case, some good thing must be wrought in you by God, it would not be grace. If it supposed that God did not meet you on the spot where you are, but asked you to make some ad-

vances towards him ere you could be assured of his mercy, it would not be grace at all. It is the especial work of the Spirit to make the sinner understand what free grace really is, and it is in teaching this that he meets the strongest resistance from man. It is on this point he finds the sinner most unteachable. He can believe almost anything sooner than grace. He discredits God's most solemn and explicit assurances of his free love. He insists on qualifying himself for receiving God's love, and till he has ascertained that he is properly qualified, he persists in doubting, nay, calls it presumption to do otherwise. He makes a merit of his unbelief, and calls it humility. He refuses to go *boldly* to a throne of grace till he has more of the Spirit's witness within himself, to entitle him to do so. How sad, how awful thus to frustrate the grace of God! How perverse and wicked to turn the Spirit's work within you into an instrument for frustrating that grace! The Spirit's object is to show you the free love of God; and you say that you must wait till you are conscious of that work in you, ere you are entitled to believe that love. The Spirit's object is to show you that grace meets you where you are; and yet you say you are waiting till you are conscious of making advances towards that grace, before you can believe it. The Spirit's object is to teach you that grace presupposes nothing but what is *bad* in you; yet you say you are waiting for some evidence of good before you will believe it. How dishonouring to the grace of God is this! How insulting to the Holy Spirit is this! What perversity and unteachableness does this manifest in you. Yet what deep love does it display in him, still to go on in his loving work of teaching you the free grace of God. He sees how prone you are to disbelieve this, and therefore he strives to engrave it upon you. He sees how prone you are to seek for something good in yourselves before you will believe it possible that God can be gracious to you; and therefore he strives to show you that there is no good thing about you, that grace takes this for granted, and that if you could discern anything good in you, you would not be a fit object for grace at all. He sees how prone you are to suspect God, to think evil and hard thoughts of God; and hence his object is to lead you to *think well of him*, to banish your hard thoughts of him, and to teach you all the freeness and richness of his grace. Such is the Spirit's teaching. Such is the Spirit's love. Blessed teaching! Gracious love! Can the most disquieted spirit refuse consolation after this? Where is there room.



for doubting? Is it not excluded? And excluded by the same law that excludes works and introduces grace in the matter of acceptance with God.

Let careless sinners tremble. "My Spirit shall not always strive." What if he should soon cease to strive with you? what if he should turn away from you who have so often turned away from him? what if he should leave you alone in your impenitence? Then what a wilderness, what a hell would your soul become? It would be soon ripe for the devouring fire, like thorns dry and ready for the burning. Satan would come in and occupy it all, seizing on you as an easy prey. What if you should never have another conviction, another desire awakened within you, but be left to reap what you have sown? The Spirit might well leave you. You have done nothing but grieved him all the days of your life. You have requited his love with hatred. You are doing so still. You cannot bear his workings within you. You try to shake them all off; might he not well leave you to perish in your sins?

**QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.** You quench him in many ways,—you quench him with your unbelief,—you quench him with the world,—you quench him with your folly,—you quench him with your lusts,—you quench him with your idle company. How awful! You quench your only light! You strive to put it out, and in doing so to make your destruction sure. For without it how can you find your way to heaven. Oh! beware of "doing despite to the Spirit of grace." Beware of disbelieving his testimony to the Saviour; beware of denying his love; beware of resisting his power!

**QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.** For if you quench him, then what remains for you here but darkness; and what remains for you hereafter but the blackness of darkness for ever?

KELSO, April 1843.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## RIGHTEOUS RECONCILIATION.

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*"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made (or become) the righteousness of God in Him."*—2 Cor. v. 21.

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"BE RECONCILED TO GOD" was the Apostle's message wherever he came. To Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, to all alike he proclaimed it. As though God did beseech them by him, he prayed them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. This is God's message still to an alienated world. He is still as gracious and as sincere in his proposals of peace and friendship. He still stretches out his hand all day long, to a disobedient and gainsaying people.<sup>1</sup> He asks us and entreats us to become his friends, telling us how willing he is to forget all our past enmity, and to remember our iniquities no more. Be THOU reconciled to me, is God's own special entreaty to every sinner.

These proposals of peace are not mere well-sounding words. There is nothing indistinct or uncertain about them. They rest upon a sure foundation; a foundation deep and broad, laid by God himself, such as to assure us that the reconciliation proposed is as righteous as it is real. It is founded upon righteousness. In it there is no compromise of justice. The law is not annulled, but magnified and made honourable. The grounds of quarrel and alienation have been removed, and a solid foundation for agreement laid; so that it is not merely a gracious, but a righteous thing in God to be reconciled to sinners, to love, to pardon, to save, to bless them. Hence there is no possibility of this agreement giving way. The controversy between the sinner and God, once settled, is settled for ever. And these are the grounds of this settlement, "he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in Him." Thus we learn that God becomes reconciled to us, not by his passing by sin with indifference as if it were a trifle, but by his laying it on another, condemning it in another, punishing it in another, and so removing it clean away from between us and Him, never again to be the ground of quarrel, or

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lxx. 2. Rom. x. 21.

the occasion of separation between us. Thus there is not merely grace for us, but *righteous* grace, grace that condemns the sin, yet justifies the sinner, grace that pardons the transgressor, and yet magnifies the law he has transgressed. Thus God, who before was righteously our enemy, can now be as righteously our friend. That righteousness which was against us, is now upon our side. It is a *righteous* peace, a righteous reconciliation, a righteous settlement of the controversy between us and God, which is now proclaimed to us through the finished work of the divine substitute, the mighty sin-bearer, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

I. *Observe the author of the reconciliation.*—It is God the Father. HE hath made him to be sin for us. It is in the infinite bosom of the Father that it had its origin. It is from his eternal love that it flowed forth. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us."<sup>1</sup> The proposals of reconciliation came from him, not from us. He thought on us ere ever we thought on him. He sought our friendship when we thought not of seeking his. He formed the purpose, devised the plan, prepared the way, accomplished the end! And all at an infinite cost! It was HE who saw us in our blood, and said to us "live." It was he who in the fulness of a love which is absolutely without measure, said, "I will reconcile them to myself, I will remove the ground of separation, I will level the mountain-barrier, I will suffer nothing to stand in the way of this my purpose of love, I will love them freely, I will receive them graciously."

II. *The instrument of effecting the reconciliation.*—The Son of the Father,—his *holy* Son, who knew no sin; in whom there was no spot, no stain, no shadow of iniquity. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," infinitely pure, and immeasurably removed from sin. He was "acquainted with grief," but not with sin. He was holy from eternity as the everlasting Son of the Father. He was holy as Immanuel, God with us—holy in his conception, holy in his birth, holy in his life, holy in his death,—altogether holy, tempted like as we are, yet without sin.<sup>2</sup> No language of man can express his infinite holiness, his irreconcilable opposition to all iniquity, whether as God or as man. In him dwelt all the infinite holiness of Godhead, and all the perfect holiness of the unfallen creature. It was his infinite holiness that fitted him for being the instrument of reconciliation. By none but an infinitely holy Being could sin be borne and put away.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

It was utterly impossible that any less holy being could accomplish this. And it was thus that God set up the highest possible standard of holiness in the very person of him who was bearing sin, that sin and holiness might be more strongly contrasted with each other, the hatefulness of the one exposed to view, and the beauty of the other set forth in its aspect of most loveable perfection. It was thus, too, that God declared his love of holiness and his hatred of sin, by means of that very instrument through which he was reconciling the sinner to himself.

III. *The manner of accomplishing this.*—He made the sinless one to be sin for us. It was thus that he laid the foundation of our peace. He did this, not by passing by sin or treating it with indifference, but by placing another in our room to bear its penalty, and that other his own holy well-beloved Son. “He made him to be sin for us.”

1. *He was made sin.*—This cannot mean that he was in any sense or degree sinful, for he knew no sin. Yet it means more than merely that he was made a sin-offering. This would not be giving the word its natural meaning, it would weaken the expression, it would destroy the contrast between his being made sin, and our being made righteousness. Doubtless he was a sin-offering, a trespass-offering, a burnt-offering. He was all offerings in one, the sum and antitype of all. Yet this does not exhaust the meaning. The meaning evidently is, that God dealt with him as if he were really a sinner, such as we are. He treated him as if all iniquity was centred in him. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was clothed with our guilt. He bore the burden of our iniquities. He was dealt with as if under the curse; he was made a curse for us. He received upon his head the vials of the Father’s wrath. He drank the cup of trembling which is the sinner’s portion. In all respects the Father dealt with him as guilty of our transgressions. “He made him to be sin.”

2. *He was made sin for us.*—He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.<sup>1</sup> He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.<sup>2</sup> He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He was treated as a sinner, because he stood as our sin-bearer, our scape-goat, our substitute, our surety. Our guilt, our curse, our chastisement, were all transferred from us to him. Our debts and responsibilities were all devolved on him. He met the law in all its claims, and satisfied them for us. He came under obedience to the law in all its duties, and fulfilled it for us. It was in our room and as our representa-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv. 25.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.



tive that he acted, obeyed, suffered, and died. He bore our sins that we might not bear them; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All this *has been* done. It is finished. The sin-bearer has accomplished the work which the Father gave him to do.

IV. *The blessed consequences of this*; that we might be made, or, simply and literally, that we might *be* the righteousness of God in him. By Christ's bearing wrath for us we are delivered from wrath, and receive forgiveness. But this is not all. Through him we are accepted before God. Through him we are made righteous; nay, divinely righteous, obtaining "the righteousness of God in him." By this exchange between the sinner and the Saviour we get all that is his, and he takes all that is ours. We not merely get a righteousness, but God's own righteousness, a righteousness divinely perfect, divinely fair, divinely precious, divinely glorious. God saw in Christ all our guilt, and he sees in us all his righteousness. He saw in him all our unworthiness: he sees in us all his worthiness. He entirely beholds us in this light. He ceases to see in us any thing else than Christ's perfection; and hence we are spoken of as actually *being the righteousness of God* in him. It would have been much to have given us what Adam had before he fell. It would have been more to have bestowed on us an angel's righteousness. It would have been more still to have clothed us with an archangel's beauty and glory; but he has gone beyond all this—infininitely beyond it all! He has bestowed on us divine glory and beauty; nothing less than the righteousness of his own eternal Son! He looks on us *in him*, blesses us *in him*, loves us *in him*, and will hereafter glorify and reward us *in him*. We are "complete in him."<sup>1</sup> It is not said we *shall be*, but we *are* complete! Complete in his completeness, righteous in his righteousness, comely in his comeliness, perfect in his perfection. "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."<sup>2</sup> It is our connection with him through believing that gives us this completeness in the Father's eyes. To the end of our earthly course we are incomplete in ourselves; yet from the moment we believed we became complete *in him*. Paul refers to the same high standing when he speaks of being "found in him,"<sup>3</sup> and explains this as meaning, not "having his own righteousness," but "the righteousness of God." Being "found in him," then, is being regarded by God according to what is in him, and not according to what is in us. Here self-righteousness stumbles, and suggests a thousand doubts

<sup>1</sup> 1 Col. ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Song iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 9.

and perplexities. It says, were I more holy, more penitent, more earnest, more prayerful, had I more evidences of the Spirit's work in me, I could be satisfied. Now, what is this but seeking to be found, not in him, but in your own holiness, or penitence, or prayers, or graces. What is it but saying, God cannot look upon me as righteous in Christ, except I have something of my own in addition, to recommend me to his favour. If God is to treat us in any measure according to what we are in respect of holiness, or grace, or love, then he must cease to look upon us in the face of his anointed Son. We must either be *wholly* found in Christ, or not at all. We must either be dealt with wholly according to what he is, or wholly according to what we are. There must be no mingling of the two,—no adding of the Spirit's work to complete the work of Christ as our righteousness before God.

All this simply in consequence of our connection with Jesus! All this righteousness, this acceptance, this completeness, simply as belonging to him! But what forms this connection between the sinner and the Saviour? How is the exchange accomplished? What is the link that binds us to this righteousness, as our sins were bound to him, so that we get all its benefits. We answer, it is written, "Christ is the end of the law *for righteousness to every one that believeth.*"<sup>1</sup> Again it is written, "To him *that worketh not, but believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."<sup>2</sup> Again it is written, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."<sup>3</sup> It is our believing, then, that forms the connection between us and Christ, not our working, or our feeling, or our deserving. When the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us he does not so work in us as to give us something in ourselves to rest on,—something to prepare us for receiving the righteousness of Christ. He opens our eyes and shows us the glory of the Saviour, so that thereby we are wholly led away from ourselves to him. That which he shows us in Jesus is what we rest on, not that which he works in us; so that as soon as he shows us Jesus, straightway we are irresistibly drawn to him. We see how altogether suitable he is,—how excellent is the way of being saved through him,—how complete the provision made for our acceptance with the Father, and believing we have life through his name. His mantle is thrown over us, and his beauty covers all our deformity. We become the righteousness of God in him. Thus, in point of acceptance with God,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. x. 4.<sup>2</sup> Rom. iv. 5.<sup>3</sup> Heb. iii. 14.

there is no difference between one believer and another, or between the same believer at the beginning and at the end of his career, just as in respect of *condemnation*, there is no difference between one sinner and another. So soon as we believe we are entirely justified, and stand "accepted in the beloved." The question is not, how far on are you in the life of faith, but are you believing at all? Is Jesus every thing to you for pardon and acceptance? All turns on the one point of owning him to be everything,—saying amen to the Father's testimony regarding him. Then "He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."<sup>1</sup>

Such are the grounds on which God's message of reconciliation is founded. Without these, to have spoken of restoration to God's favour, would have been saying peace, peace, when there was no peace. But with these we can say, peace, peace to the sinner when there is peace.<sup>2</sup> Grace can flow freely forth now, because righteousness has had its due. On this footing it is, that God is now sending abroad his proposals of friendship to us. He stretches out his hand to all sinners entreating them to be at peace with him, and telling them that there is nothing now to prevent a lasting friendship being established between him and them. God's gracious heart is now pouring itself down upon this guilty world of ours in a full stream of love, through this righteous channel. It is this that enables God to meet the sinner just as he is and just where he stands. And it is because of this righteous provision for peace between the world and God, that we go forth to tell men of God's gracious mind regarding them, and his proposals of friendship to them. It is because of this that we are enabled to go up to every man and say personally to him, "be reconciled to God."

1. *Be reconciled to God, for see how he hates sin.*—Before he could pardon it, he must lay it on his own Son, and when laid on him it must be punished in him. He must bear the infinite wrath of God against iniquity. How infinitely he must hate sin,—how certainly and swiftly will he avenge it! In clinging to sin you are clinging to that abominable thing which he hates, and on which his terrible vengeance is about to descend.

2. *Be reconciled to God, for see how earnestly he seeks to be reconciled.*—What infinite pains he has taken to secure this! At what a cost he accomplished it! If he had not been in earnest about this, would he have parted with his own Son? Would he have bruised him and put him to grief and shame? Would he have emptied the vials of his

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. vi. 14.

wrath on him? Would he have refused to let the cup of agony pass from his holy lips? How much he must have been bent on reconciliation, when he could consent to all this, rather than that we should remain unreconciled! How sincere and true must his entreaties of reconciliation be!

3. *Be reconciled to God, for see what a righteous reconciliation this is.*—Its foundations are laid on righteousness, and therefore they are immoveable. You cannot say, we are not sure whether it is a real reconciliation, or whether it will prove lasting. It is righteous, and therefore it is real, and sure, and lasting. What can ever occur to break up a friendship founded upon righteousness? What can ever renew the breach which has thus been healed, or sever the golden link by which the soul is inseparably bound to God?

4. *Be reconciled, for see the blessed effects of this.*—It puts you in possession of such mighty blessings. It accomplishes such a glorious exchange between Christ and your soul. It clothes you with raiment so divine. It provides for you such a righteousness, so spotless, so precious, so divinely perfect: better than Adam's, more excellent than that of angels,—the very righteousness of God! What a dignity, what a glory is the portion of believers! Not merely to be restored to what we lost in Adam, but to a glory far brighter, an inheritance far richer, a crown far more resplendent! To be exalted above angels, and placed upon the very throne of God's eternal Son. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

5. *Be reconciled, for learn the awful consequences of remaining unreconciled.*—If unreconciled, then are you still enemies, unrighteous, condemned, children of wrath, bearing your own sin and sinking under its weight to the lowest hell. No removal of the curse for you! No bearing of the wrath for you! No deliverance from the second death! Great is the inheritance of the saints in light, so great shall be your inheritance of darkness. Souls saved by grace are made heirs of an infinite glory and blessedness,—so you who reject this grace must be heirs of infinite shame and woe. Ransomed souls in heaven are raised far above angels,—so you who remain unreconciled must go down to a place in hell far lower than the devils. Yours must be the place in hell—lower than Sodom and Gomorrah, lower than Tyre and Sidon, lower even than Chorazin and Bethsaida,—for you have rejected the great salvation in a way such as no devil ever could do, and such as none

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liv. 17.



of these guilty cities ever did. O dreadful doom of unreconciled sinners! The lowest place in hell; the very "blackness of darkness," in a region where all is night!

*Be reconciled* then, for now is the accepted time and the day of salvation. "This is the acceptable year of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> "The day of vengeance is at hand." "Agree with thine adversary quickly, ere the day of reckoning arrive." *Be reconciled*, for time is short, days and years are flying swiftly on,—eternity is at hand. You may soon be beyond the region where it is possible for a sinner to be reconciled. Hope will soon be exchanged for despair. The possibility of being saved will soon pass into the utter and awful certainty that you are *lost*, for ever lost! *Be reconciled*, for days of darkness are near. The last days are already coming into view, if indeed we have not already entered on them. The time of fearful tribulation is approaching, and what unreconciled soul will be able to abide it. Who but a child of light will be able to make his way onward in those days of utter darkness. "Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."<sup>2</sup> *Be reconciled to God*, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! This world's history is rapidly nearing its close. It will not be long till the bridegroom come and the door be shut! It will not be long till the judge descend and summon you to his bar. Jesus has long delayed his coming, out of long-suffering love to a rebellious world, but he will not always delay it. He will come at length. How soon I know not. It may be very soon. There is nothing that man knows of between us and his coming. It may be at the very door! His chariot may be already on its way. O then be reconciled to God! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when once his wrath is kindled but a little."

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 19; Is. lxi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xiii. 16.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE THRONE OF GRACE.

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*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*"—Heb. iv. 16.

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JESUS the Son of God is our Great High Priest. He has offered his one sacrifice, whereby he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.<sup>1</sup> His offering has been accepted, and he himself acknowledged of the Father. He has passed within the vail; He has gone into the heavens as our forerunner, to appear in the presence of God for us; He has taken his seat upon the throne of grace,—the mercy-seat above! This "High Priest of our profession" is altogether such an one as we need. Both his office and his character make him most suitable for sinners. In his office there is pardon and cleansing proclaimed to us; and in his character there shine forth the irresistible attractions of grace and love. He is an High Priest of good things to come.<sup>2</sup> He is a "merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."<sup>3</sup> He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.<sup>4</sup> Such is the High Priest of whom the Apostle speaks. Seeing, therefore, we have such a friend above, such a condescending, compassionate, tender-hearted brother, now at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, let us no longer stand afar off, but, laying aside our guilt and fear, let us boldly approach the throne of grace, whereon this gracious one is seated, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The throne is erected, the High Priest is there; the way is open; the vail is rent; every necessary provision has been made; nothing is wanting for the sinner's assur-

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Heb. x. 14.    <sup>2</sup> Heb. ix. 11.    <sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 17.    <sup>4</sup> Heb. v. 11.

ance ; access to God is free ; every thing invites us ;—then let us approach—let us go up to the mercy-seat, with reverential feelings, yet with calm and trustful hearts.<sup>1</sup> Jesus is there, why stand aloof ? Jesus is there, why fear and doubt ? Jesus is there, why be afraid to lay our whole case before him ? Does he not say, “ be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid ? ”

Looking then with the vail, we see a throne, and behold, it is a throne of grace ! And for whom is it reared ? For sinners. And how are they to come ? Boldly. And what gives sinners such boldness ? The throne itself. And what do they obtain by coming ? They obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1. *The Throne.*—It is a throne of grace. Elsewhere it is called a “ mercy-seat.” And it is placed in the holy of holies—the immediate presence of God, to show us that his mercy and his holiness flow from the same deep fountain, and that in order to get grace we must come as near God as to obtain holiness.<sup>2</sup> Many speak as if grace were dispensed by God only at a distance from his holy presence, but here we are taught that its dwelling is the secret of his tabernacle—the innermost shrine of his temple—the very holiest chamber of his secret presence. It is into these we must enter if we would have grace ; and these are all thrown open to us through the precious blood that is sprinkled upon the threshold.<sup>3</sup> It is called *a throne* because it is the seat of rightful authority, the place where government is administered, so that whatever is done here is done by the authority of the King, and in a righteous way, according to the strictest laws of the kingdom. But why is it called *a throne of grace* ? (1.) Because it is *founded* upon grace. It is upon the free, everlasting love of the Father that this throne is built. Every stone in its foundation is free love. And it is in the infinite depths of the Father’s bosom that these foundations are laid. “ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” (2.) Because every part of it throughout is grace. Not only the foundation, but every stone in the entire fabric is of grace. It is cemented together by grace. The corner stone is grace. The headstone is grace. Every ornament wherewith it is adorned is grace. Its covering is grace. Nothing is to be seen in it, or about it, or upon it, but grace. (3.) It is

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 10.<sup>2</sup> Exod. xix. 4-6.<sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 13.

erected for purposes of grace. Here grace is dispensed, nothing but grace, yet all in a righteous way. Nothing but grace proceeds from this throne. Every thing connected with it and coming from it is grace,—grace unmixed and pure. Not partly grace and partly something else, but grace altogether and exclusively. It is not called a throne of righteousness, nor a throne of judgment, nor a throne of merit; but in distinction from all these it is called a throne of grace. It is founded on grace. It is composed of grace. It is adorned with grace. It is erected for purposes of grace. He who sits thereon is gracious. Its laws are grace. Its transactions are grace. It has nothing to do with merit, or claim, or worthiness, but with the opposites of all these. It is grace to the uttermost, grace without mixture, grace which knows no bounds. It is grace without terms and conditions and qualifications; grace which takes simply for granted man's total worthlessness, helplessness, and sin.<sup>1</sup>

II. *For whom is this throne of grace erected?*—For those who need grace, whose case can be met by nothing but free love. It is for sinners, for the lost, the helpless, the worthless, the undone. It is for those who have no merit, no price, no recommendation, who are utterly destitute of every qualification, who cannot point to one good thing about them, whose “whole head is sick, and whose whole heart is faint.” It is for those who would not be allowed to approach any other throne; who would not be listened to for a moment any where else. They would be driven from a throne of merit, or righteousness, or judgment; but they are welcome to a throne of grace. It is the very place for them. It is expressly provided for such as they. Had they any merit they might go to a throne of merit. Had they any righteousness, they might go to a throne of righteousness. Had they any hope of urging a successful plea in self-defence, they might go to a throne of judgment. But seeing they are utterly destitute of all these, whither can they betake themselves but to a throne which welcomes those who are rejected every where else, and which asks no claim but that of wretchedness, and want, and sin? This throne is intended not for those who have anything, but for those who are in want of everything. And it is just *their* having nothing that makes them welcome here. To whom

<sup>1</sup> Matt ix. 11, 12. Rom. iii. 24. Gal. iii. 22. 1st Tim. i. 12, 16.



does the physician come? Not to the whole, but to the sick. For whom is the hospital reared? For the diseased. It is their *disease* that constitutes their claim for admittance there. The worse their disease, the more suitable are they for it, and the more welcome should it be to them. It is their need of healing that makes them fit objects for it. So it is our need of grace that makes us fit objects for a throne of grace.

But further, all else are excluded from this throne but they who need grace. Not only is it intended for them, and suited to their case, but all, save they, are positively shut out from it. It is just the very place for a sinner, but for none else. Its gates are closed against all those who come with any other plea than their *wants*. Hence, so many are sent empty away. They acknowledge a throne of grace, profess to come to it, and to come to it earnestly, but they do not come *empty*—they do not come destitute. They try to establish some claim even when professing to have none. They are not content to be mere receivers, mere debtors to grace. They want to come with a price. They are too proud to come without it. Hence, they try to turn everything into a price. They turn their earnestness, or their convictions, or their terrors, or even their very act of coming, into a *price*, and hope, that because of these, they may be accepted. No wonder that they return as empty as they come; for they came as those who *had something*, not as those who were destitute of everything. They came to it not purely as a throne of grace, or at least a throne of grace to *them*. They came to it as partly a throne of merit, which must be approached only by those who have some qualification to bring. Perhaps they admit that it is purely a throne of grace, and must be approached only as such; but then they think that *they*, individually, dare not *expect* to receive anything until conscious of some inward feeling, as a token from God that *they* are accepted. In other words, they profess to believe that all things are ready, only they are waiting for some *personal invitation* to the feast. Now, what is this but saying that the throne of grace is not open to sinners *as such*, but to those to whom God gives some additional token of welcome; and that no sinner ought to go with boldness to the throne, until he is in some mysterious way assured, not only that the throne is erected for sinners but in a special manner *for himself*. We might as well deny that it is a throne of grace, and that we are sinners. For if it be such a throne of grace, and if it be erected

simply for those who *need* grace, then it must be as free to each one reading these lines as to any saint that ever approached it; and each one who really knows this, will come without hesitation or suspicion. Though conscious of ten thousand wants, and ten thousand sins, yet here is the place where *he* is welcome, just *because* he has all these wants, and is loaded with all these sins.

III. *How are we to come to this throne?*—The Apostle answers, we are to come “boldly,”—not doubtingly, hesitatingly, uncertainly, but “boldly.” We are to come confidently, “in the full assurance of faith,” certain of obtaining an answer, not thinking it possible that we can be refused; not counting it presumptuous to come so boldly, but knowing that it is only when coming thus boldly that we come in true humility, and that all doubting springs from pride and self-righteousness. In another part of this epistle<sup>1</sup> we read, “Let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith:” and again, “he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all such as diligently seek him.”<sup>2</sup> We are not only *warranted* to come boldly, but we are *commanded* to do so. It is our *sin* if we come doubtingly. It is as much God’s command to come *boldly* as it is to come at all. No one doubts that God invites and enjoins all sinners to come to this throne; no one, then, can doubt that he commands them to come *boldly*. If we are warranted to come at all, we are warranted to come boldly. It is our sin to refuse to come, it is equally our sin not to come boldly. God, in providing this throne of grace, calls on us to come to it as boldly as the innocent go to a throne of righteousness, or the worthy to a throne of merit. Nothing less than such a throne could have entitled us to come to God at all, and nothing more is needed to warrant us to come with entire boldness and confidence, even from the first moment that we draw near to that throne. A sinner coming for the first time is no more warranted to come doubtingly, than is a saint just stepping into glory. Both have the same throne to go to; both equally need it: both ought to come with the same boldness, for both come simply as sinners. All the graces of the saint cannot give him boldness, and all the want of these in the sinner ought not to prevent it. Are we satisfied that it is really a throne of grace? Then let us come boldly: let us draw near in the

<sup>1</sup> Ch. x. 19.<sup>2</sup> xi. 6.

full assurance of faith. It is the simple boldness that glorifies God. It is this that He expects and delights in. It is to give this that He has prepared such a throne. And it is this that honours that throne which he has erected. Why, then, should any sinner come with less than boldness to such a throne as this?

IV. *What gives this boldness?*—It is the simple fact that it is a throne of grace we are coming to, that emboldens and assures us. So long as we do not understand the real nature of that throne, or come to it with a price or claim in our hand; so long as we conceive it to be partly a throne of merit requiring some qualification on our part, so long it is impossible that we can come with boldness. But when the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see that it is entirely a throne of grace, then this sight alone and by itself, dissipates our fears and draws us in happy confidence to a throne so suitable and so glorious. Nothing more is needed to remove every fear than this simple fact. It was our not seeing this that first raised suspicions in our hearts, and made us come trembling and uncertain; and it is our seeing this, and this alone, that allays these suspicions and inspires us with the confidence of a child coming to a father's knee. Whenever we try to draw our boldness from any other source, immediately our souls are overclouded and our hands hang down. It is a throne of grace, and what more can we say? What more does a guilty soul need to know, in order to assure him, not only that he is welcome, but that it would be most dishonouring to God and to his throne to come with less than the assured expectation of being heard.

Our fears may whisper, "You are unworthy." True, but it is a throne of grace, a throne just for the unworthy and none else. Why, then, should our worthiness make us doubt? Still we may say, but alas we have no good about us, no evidences of grace, no deep convictions of sin, no repentance, no right feelings, no faith, no love, no humility. True, but it is a throne of grace, and why therefore should the want of all these make you hesitate to come boldly? The want of these would have disqualified you from going to any other throne. You might well have doubted, had it been a throne of merit or of righteousness; but seeing it is a throne of grace, all grace, nothing but grace, how is it possible for even you to doubt? To make these things reasons for not coming boldly would just be to

deny that it is a throne of grace at all. *It is the grace that is in the throne, and not the grace that is in us, that gives us boldness.* Nor is it partly the one and partly the other, it is the former alone that can really do so. It is not what we see or feel in ourselves; it is simply what we see in the throne that imparts confidence. Every other source of confidence is fluctuating and uncertain. This alone is steadfast. It changes not; neither can it ever lose its power. Nothing will suit a sinner's case but something *without* him and independent of him, something which abides the same amid all his manifold changes and uncertain frames. And here is the very thing he needs—a throne of grace, and that grace the grace of Him who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

He that is not satisfied with this simple fact shews either that he does not understand its meaning, or that he is too proud to be entirely a debtor to the free love of God. He who is not content with this, as of itself sufficient to dispel all his doubts, must just go on doubting; for how is it possible that the sight of any thing else can give him confidence when a throne of grace has failed to do so? And if at length the Holy Spirit graciously remove his fears, it will not be by turning his eyes to any objects within, but by showing him more fully the free grace of the throne, and the assurance which that of itself gives him that he is welcome, though the chief of sinners.

Are you then coming to this throne without boldness? Does not this show you that you have much to learn as to the nature of that throne you are coming to? If you understood this, it is possible that such uncertainty could remain? You say, but though I have not this confidence, I am earnest and importunate. Well, but you might be so, even though there were no throne at all to go to. It is *confidence* more than *earnestness* that a throne of grace calls forth. At the throne of judgment men will be earnest enough, but there will be no boldness then. Earnestness without confidence shows that you do not know that it is a throne of grace at which you are pleading. Your earnestness shews that you are *anxious* enough to secure the blessings sought; but it does not show that you know the way of obtaining them. It rather shows that you are upon a plan of your own for buying them with your own fervent prayers. Your earnestness does not honour the throne nor Him who sits thereon. Nay, it dishonours Him, for it takes for granted that He is a hard and austere man whom you



cannot implicitly trust, and from whom you can obtain nothing but by dint of earnest importunity and effort. It is your *confidence*, your expectation, your trust, that honour both the throne and the God who erected it for sinners such as you. The sooner, therefore, you trust, and the more implicit is your confidence, the more are you giving glory to God.

Our expectation of receiving should be a confident one, just because it is not founded upon any thing in our character or doings, but upon something altogether independent of us, which is not affected by our fluctuations in the least, and abides ever the same. Yet, strange to say, there are many who think it unsafe to have this boldness till some foundation has been laid for it in the improved condition of their own souls. What! is it unsafe to build upon the rock alone? Is the fabric insecure unless sand be mingled with the foundation rock? Is the garment not wide enough to wrap us unless eked out by tatters of our own? Are we to doubt so long as we have merely *the throne* to embolden us, but to cease our doubts so soon as we discover some good thing in ourselves?

But may we not be Christians without having this boldness? I am not careful to answer a question like this. This, however, I may say, that matters have come to a sad pass indeed when a man's only comfort is that he may be a Christian and yet not know it,—that he may be a believer and yet have no confidence,—that he may be a child of God and yet not be sure whether God be his Father or not.

Do you say then, tell me what I am to do? Ah, are you bent upon *doing* something,—thereby proving that you are not satisfied with what has been already done by another. You want me to put you upon doing something in order to get this boldness; whereas I want to put you off doing anything in order to get this, and simply to take it from what another has done. But you say, tell me how I am to trust? Ah, do I need to tell the child how to trust its parent, or throw itself upon the bosom of its mother? Is it not enough that it knows its parent's heart? And is it not enough that you know the heart of God and see the throne of grace he has erected? What a display of self-righteousness is the struggle to believe! What a manifest proof that all unbelief is the belief of a lie,—a lie which it costs such a desperate struggle to part with!

Such then is the nature and meaning of that voice which speaks to you from the Throne of Grace, that it leaves you

no other alternative but either to doubt God's word and deny his truth, or else to enter upon immediate peace and assured reconciliation.

V. *What do we obtain by coming?*—Every blessing that we stand in need of and that to the full. Here is the fountain of all blessing, from pardon of sin up to the fullest amount of holiness and joy. These the Apostle sums up under two heads, “mercy and grace.” He says, “let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain *mercy* and find *grace* to help in time of need.” These two words comprehend every thing. First there is mercy, then there is grace.

1. *That we may obtain mercy.*—Mercy is tender love to the miserable and guilty, showing itself in forgiving and blessing them. It is the feeling called forth by the sinner's lost estate, and therefore regards him simply as a sinner, a lost one. Now this forgiving love is just what the sinner needs at first. It is the first thing that he cries for when awakened to a sense of sin. It is also the first thing which God bestows, and until he has given this he can give nothing else. Such is exactly the view of it presented here by the Apostle. It lies *uppermost* on the throne of grace, placed so as to draw our attention at once. It is the first object that attracts our eye and invites our hand. Hence the words of the passage literally are, “that we may *take* mercy;”—take it as a thing held out to us;—take it as a thing pressed most fervently and freely upon our notice and acceptance. It is mercy that the sinner needs, for he is guilty, condemned, under the law, under the curse, under wrath; and it is mercy that is first extended to him that he may be delivered from guilt and condemnation, sheltered from the curse and wrath which were his due, and brought out from being under the law to be under grace.

Sinner! there is mercy for thee! It lies upon the mercy-seat inviting thee to take it. It is mercy to the vilest, mercy to the uttermost, mercy which embraces every sinner on this side of hell! And it is mercy *now*; mercy to thee as thou standest in thy sin, mercy in which there is no delay, no uncertainty! Take it and be forgiven. Take it and enter into peace with God!

2. *That we may find grace to help in time of need*, or more literally, “grace for all needful help.” Having obtained mercy, it is grace that is next presented to us; that

is, not merely the free love of God, but that full measure of infinite blessing which that free love bestows. Hence it is written of Christ “of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace.”<sup>1</sup> Hence also in the apostolic salutations “grace” is the whole sum and burden of all their prayers in behalf of their brethren. Hence also it was said to Paul in his hour of trial “my grace is sufficient for thee,”<sup>2</sup> and hence Paul exhorted Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> So here it seems to be used as comprising all fulness and variety of blessing, “the manifold grace of God.”<sup>4</sup>

We enter into the Holy of Holies, we go up to the mercy seat. Its *covering* is mercy. We remove the covering and wrap it round our guilty wrath-deserving souls. Then are we safe, for the covering which wraps us is divine. Not a drop or ray of wrath can penetrate it. But having obtained this, we begin to discover that we need much more than this. This is enough to shield us from wrath; but we need to have our emptiness filled, our hunger satisfied, and our thirst quenched. We need to be delivered from a body of death; we need to be made holy, and strengthened in the inner-man. How are we to obtain these? We look around, and behold the mercy-seat itself contains the fountain of all these needed blessings. Beneath the covering which we had removed, we discern this precious fountain; and now we are put in possession of every thing we require. We take our stand at the side of this well of water, and drink without ceasing from its exhaustless stores. We have found supply for every want,—free provision for every various state of our souls. It is just with us as with some poor bankrupt, whose debts some friend has undertaken to cancel. He gets his past debts paid, but what is he to live upon? His compassionate friend steps forward, and tells him that he is welcome to draw upon him at any time, and to any amount he pleases. Such is the manner in which we first obtain mercy, and then have the fountain of grace opened to us, that out of it we may draw continually and without limit or condition.

In this infinite fountain of the manifold grace of God, there is every needful provision for a saint during all his pilgrimage. There is something here for all times and seasons, for all states and circumstances, for all times and trials. We are unholy; iniquities prevail against us; the flesh

lusteth against the spirit. But here is grace to enable us to be holy. We walk too much with the world, too little with God; our walk at the best is uneven, distant, changeful. Here is grace to enable us to walk with God, like Enoch; to have our conversation in Heaven, even when dwelling on the earth. Our souls cleave unto the dust; the things of earth engross and depress us. Here is grace to enable us to set our affections on things above, to live as those who are already seated with Christ in heavenly places, and from these look down upon the earth.<sup>1</sup> We have daily infirmities, both of body and spirit, to struggle with. Here is grace to enable us to be strong in the midst of weakness, yea, to glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on us.<sup>2</sup> We have a race to run. Here is grace to enable us to run it well,—to run it with patience. We have enemies to war with, not only flesh and blood, but principalities and powers. Here is grace to make us more than conquerors through him that loved us.<sup>3</sup> Here, in short, is grace for everything, for every want, for every time:—grace wherewith to live, grace wherewith to die. Why then should we be poor so long as God is rich? Why should we be weak so long as He is mighty? Why should we be empty so long as He is full? Why should any necessity or trial ever be too great for us, seeing we have Him to undertake for us, and seeing we have grace like this to help us in time of need? Why should we ever either fear or doubt, seeing we have a fountain of free love like this to draw from continually? O folly, passing all other folly! O wickedness incredible and inexcusable, for the child of faith to give way to perplexity and fear! Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.<sup>4</sup>

Such is the THRONE OF GRACE! Such its freeness to every sinner. Such the boldness with which he ought to come: such the sure ground of confidence in coming: such the blessing to be obtained. Come then, sinner, come! The throne invites you, and says COME! The High Priest that is seated on it, invites you, and says COME! God the Father, who erected that throne for such as you, says COME! The Word says, COME! Ministers say, COME! This tract says, COME! Each passing hour says, COME. Each trial that afflicts you says, COME! Every voice above you and around you, says COME. COME boldly to this throne of grace.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 6.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9.<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 37.<sup>4</sup> Jo. xv. 4.



Remember that this throne will not remain for ever. It has its set time. After that, it must be removed, and in its room the throne of judgment will be set up. And oh! how different the one from the other! The one is all grace together. The other has no grace at all. All about it and proceeding from it, is righteousness, judgment, condemnation! Hear the description of it:—"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."<sup>1</sup> How soon the throne of grace will be taken down, and this awful throne set up, you know not. It may be soon. Time cannot always last. Christ will not always tarry. He will come. Then time shall be no longer. Then grace shall be at an end. Then the acceptable year of the Lord shall close, and the day of vengeance begin.<sup>2</sup> Then you shall hear no longer the gracious invitation of the Saviour, "Come unto me." All that you shall hear will be the sentence of the Judge, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Stand no longer without. Tarry no longer by the way. Enter into the sanctuary. Come within the vail, for behold it is rent. Go up to the mercy-seat. Go as thou art. Go boldly, even though the chief of sinners. Remember it is a throne of grace thou art going to; therefore let no amount of sin in you, lead you to despond, or to draw near uncertainly. Go up to it. All that thou needest is there. Take the full measure of everlasting blessings. Fear not. Shrink not. It is just for such as thee. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 11, 12.<sup>2</sup> Is. lxi. 2.

KELSO, Jan. 1844.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE TRUE HEART.

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*Let us draw near with a true heart.*—HEB. x. 22.

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MAN's heart, by nature, is not *true*. It is neither true to himself nor to God. In some respects it may be said to be true to himself and his fellow-men, when it is true to his own interests and true to his usual character, or when it is true to the friendships and affections of earth. In the last of these respects we often hear of the heart's *truth*. We hear how *truly* hearts beat in affection for each other. We hear of friends being true to friends, so as to maintain their mutual constancy unshaken amid distance, suffering, and peril. But in all this, how seldom is it that we hear of hearts that are true to God and to Christ.

What is a true heart? It is not a perfect heart, for where is that to be found on earth? It is not a heart where sin has no place at all, and where all is holy and spiritual, for who, save the spirits of the just made perfect, have reached this stature? It is not a heart that never wavers, never saddens, never droops, never languishes, never grows cold, for that we must seek a brighter world and a more genial clime.

A true heart is one that has ceased to misunderstand and mistrust the character of God, that takes that character simply as it is revealed in grace, and rests where God would have the sinner to rest, on his forgiving love. A true heart is one that has ceased to suspect God or to look upon Him as an austere and hard master. The true-ness of the heart consists in its right apprehensions of the character of God; in "knowing the Father" as he has made himself known to sinners in Christ Jesus. To be true to God is to know Him as the gracious One, as the pardoning One, as the sin-hating, yet sinner-loving God. He who has not yet seen enough of Him in the Cross, as to dispel all his wicked doubts and guilty fears, is not yet *true* to God.

A false heart is one which does not know the Father. Its views of God's character are distorted and dim. It seeks, in self-righteousness, to do something or feel something which may draw towards it the favour of God, and it cannot rest or trust without finding this. It does not understand the entire freeness of the grace revealed in Jesus, and will not believe that this grace is so free and wide as to meet it, even as it is, without one particle of good about it either in feeling or in action. It suspects

God, because it is not satisfied with itself. It thinks it right to cherish doubts and fears, nay, and it thinks it wrong to have confidence so long as there is so much of evil and so little of good about itself. All this is being *false-hearted* to God. It looks like humility, but it is pride. It looks like dissatisfaction with self, but it is just a trying to get something in self to be satisfied with. It looks like a sense of unworthiness, but it is just self-righteousness, and a refusal to be content to be so altogether unworthy, as to be indebted for entire salvation to a grace that has to do with none but the unworthy. Some may think that though we may call this false-heartedness to God, it is at least being true to his holiness and true to his law, for it is a dread of these that produces this despondency and keeps the soul from rest. But this is not even being true to his holiness, for it is supposing that God's holiness is at variance with his grace, and that we best magnify his holiness by distrusting his grace. And is not this being false to God—false to his holiness as much as to his grace? Is it not just saying, that God has taken so little care to guard his holiness that it is necessary for the sinner to do something for this end, and that the best way to do this is just to continue doubting until evidences of being holy can be discovered in the soul. But God has taken care of his own holiness and has not left it to us to do this. He has so fully provided for it in the gospel, that, the more we trust his grace, the more we honour his holiness, while, on the other hand, by distrusting his grace, we refuse to give to his holiness the honour that is its due.

What, then, is the cure of false-heartedness? How is a true heart to be found? I need not say that all must come from the Holy Spirit. The same mighty power that wrought in Christ, when He was raised from the dead, must be put forth towards us. But how does the Holy Spirit produce this true heart? What is that He shows us which removes our falseness of heart and makes it true? How does God set hearts right with Himself?

God does all this by showing us what He really is. He shows us how much we have mistaken his character and how little we have done justice to his love. He shows us that He is not what our false hearts have supposed him to be. We have sadly misjudged Him, and imagined Him to be such an one as we ourselves, that will give only as He gets and loves only as He is loved in return. Now, the Holy Spirit withdraws the veil and reveals the gracious countenance of God. He shows us how much we have wronged Him, how little we have understood either the

freeness or the largeness of his grace, and then it is that the suspicions of our false hearts give way; then, instead of standing afar off, we draw nigh; then, instead of cherishing fears and doubts because of our sinfulness, we lay all these aside, seeing that, since God has not made these a reason for not loving us, we should not make them a reason for doubting that love. When thus we get "acquainted with God," we are at peace. We feel that nothing more is needed, for producing perfect peace, but this acquaintanceship with God in his true character. It was our not knowing Him that filled us with trouble, and it is our knowing Him that fills us with peace. The knowledge of the Father is the sunshine of Heaven to our benighted souls. Thus our false-heartedness is removed, and we become true to God, and true to Christ. It is what we see in them that makes us true to them. When we see them as they are, *trueness* of heart springs up unbidden. We find the resting-place sufficient, and so we rest.

But do not our sins rob us of this? Perhaps, in point of fact, they often do, but, most assuredly, they ought not. For what amount of sin in us can make God less an object to be trusted? Can any sin that we have committed make it right for us to be untrue to God, untrue to Christ? Is one sin to be the ground for our committing another? Are we to be false to Jesus because sin has been found upon us? Dare any of us say it is right to be false to Jesus, because we have been guilty of sin? Ought we not rather to say, we have certainly transgressed, but still we dare not add to the guilt of these transgressions, the still greater sin of being false to Jesus. No degree of sin in us can make him less the sinner's Saviour and the sinner's friend. Nothing can alter his character of grace, or render less efficacious his infinitely precious blood. Should the consciousness of sin, then, make us false to Jesus? Was it the knowledge that we were *not* sinners that first made us true to Him? No it was not. In the full view and sense of all our guilt, we were drawn to Him, because He was altogether such an one as a *sinner* might lean upon. And how, then, can the fuller discovery of our guilt make us lean upon Him less, or make us think it necessary to be *untrue* to Him? Has He deserved this at our hands?

The knowledge of immediate and complete forgiveness, through the belief of the gospel, is that which alone can give us true hearts. An imperfect knowledge of this keeps us untrue. A doubtful pardon, uncertainty as to our acceptance with God, cannot make us true. A gospel which brings us merely the hope of pardon, which



makes reconciliation with God a future and distant privilege, cannot deliver us from the natural falseness of our hearts. But a gospel that assures us of God's gracious mind towards sinners, and tells us of sin put away by the sacrifice of God's own Son, does surely proclaim enough to disarm our dread, to allay our suspicion, and to inspire us at once with the most child-like confidence. A gospel that tells us how true Jesus has been to us is the only gospel that can make us true to Him. Any thing which would awaken in us the very slightest doubt of His grace and love, tends to make us false to Him. And surely He has been true to us whatever we have been to Him. He was true to us when he said, "Lo I come to do thy will O God." He was true to us, when, in the fulness of time, He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He was true to us, when, during three and thirty years, He sojourned below in this world of sin, seeking the lost, and gathering those who, like sheep had gone astray. He was true to us when He went into the garden of Gethsemane and drank the bitter cup. He was true to us when He endured the cruel mocking and scourging and spitting, and when He allowed the hands of wicked men to place upon His head the crown of thorns. He was true to us when He died and when He went down into the grave, when He rose again, and when He ascended on high leading captivity captive. He is true to us now in heaven, as true as He was on earth, for He ever liveth to make intercession for us. If, then, He has been so true to us, how can we be false to Him?

Look at Jesus, Believers, and that will keep you true to Him! Look at Jesus, sinners, and the sight of what He is and what He has done will make you ashamed of that false heart of yours. It will make you ashamed of your doubts, ashamed of your treachery, ashamed of your unkindness, ashamed of your unbelief, and make you fall at His feet, saying, MY LORD AND MY GOD! Looking at yourself may make you afraid to trust, but looking at Him will make you afraid and ashamed to distrust. Looking unto Jesus is the cure for a false heart, and the only way for producing a true one.

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## THE CHOSEN ONE.

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*"My Chosen One in whom my soul delighteth."*—Is. xlii. 1.

*"My Servant whom I have chosen."*—Is. xliii. 10.

*"The Christ, the chosen of God."*—Lu. xxiii. 35.

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It is Jesus who is THE CHOSEN ONE. He is, by pre-eminence, the object of the Father's choice. Above all other beings in heaven and on earth, and in a way infinitely distinct from every one of them, He is the eternally chosen of the Father,—the chosen of Him whose divine wisdom knew well the value of that which it was choosing, and, therefore, could not choose amiss.

He alone was chosen for what was *good* in Him. God may have reasons for choosing objects, apart from what He finds in themselves; but in the case of the only begotten Son, it was the matchless excellence and glory found in Him that made Him the object of the Father's everlasting choice. It was thus that He was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, being daily His delight."<sup>1</sup> Other objects might be chosen for something good in them, and God, in looking upon these objects of His choice, might pronounce them "very good."<sup>2</sup> But still even these had only *something* that was good in them, Jesus had *all*. They were destitute of many things in which God delighted, Jesus was wanting in none. He had *every* thing that the Father's heart could desire. Every unsinning creature is good according to its kind, and may to that extent be the object of choice. But every creature is lacking,—lacking in many things, and, therefore, cannot be the object of full and satisfied choice to him who can be com-

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. viii. 23, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. 31.

pletely satisfied with nothing but what is absolutely perfect, not only without a sin, but without an imperfection or flaw. This perfection was found in Jesus alone; and because of this He was the Father's Chosen One. Jehovah's whole soul was satisfied in Him;<sup>1</sup> and it must have been boundless excellence on which the Father's soul could thus entirely rest.

The saints are doubtless the objects of the Father's choice. Hence they are said to be "called *according to His purpose*."<sup>2</sup> They are said to be "*chosen* before the foundation of the world."<sup>3</sup> They are said to be "from the beginning *chosen* to salvation."<sup>4</sup> But still they are not chosen as Jesus was. It cannot be that they should be the objects of Jehovah's choice as Jesus was. In their case it is an object altogether unworthy that is fixed upon; in His case it is the opposite. In their case it is not the good that is found or foreknown in them that causes them to be chosen; in Him it was.<sup>5</sup> He could not but be chosen, for in Him there centred all created and all uncreated excellence. His claims to be the Chosen One are without a rival; for all was perfection in Him; divine perfection, without a defect, or blemish, or stain. He was the chief among ten thousand, as much in the Father's eyes as He is in the eyes of his saints. In this, as in all other things, He has had from eternity the pre-eminence; a pre-eminence which shall remain undisputed and unrivalled throughout all the eternity that is to come. Blessed pre-eminence for us, for He is our Head!

<sup>1</sup> Is. xlii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 28; 2 Tim. i. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. i. 4.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> There are some who deny this choosing. They are so zealous for man's free-will that they will not admit of free-will in God. All the choosing they will allow God to exercise is the choosing of those whom He foreknows will turn to Him,—*i. e.* choosing those who first choose Him. They quote in defence 1 Pet. i. 2, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;" and they ask, Is this not choosing according to foreknowledge? Yes, beyond all doubt it is. But of what is it the *foreknowledge*? Is it of the evil or the good? Certainly of the *evil*; for what else was there to foreknow? God, foreknowing all the circumstances of the case,—the evil of the whole race of Adam,—that there was nothing but evil about any, no desire even to turn or believe, nothing but absolute corruption, enmity, helplessness, and death,—God foreseeing all this, chose some out of this mass of wickedness. And thus they are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

None can ever claim to be the Father's Chosen One, as He can do. Angels may stand exalted in power and unfallen excellence, but they come immeasurably short of His matchless claims. The Church, the Bride, shall be presented "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;" she shall be placed beside Him on His throne; but still His claims remain undivided and unapproached. In regard to these there can be no rivalry, no equality, no, not the most distant conceivable approach by any other. Oh, what an infinite and ineffable perfection of "glory and of beauty" must be in Him to render Him thus above all other beings, the supreme object of Jehovah's satisfaction,—the Father's Chosen One!<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless, the Church is the eternally chosen of the Father,—given by Him to Christ before all ages. This is her glory and her joy. This is her dignity above all other creatures; and well would it be for her if she would keep in mind this her peculiar pre-eminence, and live like Jehovah's "called, chosen, faithful" one.<sup>2</sup> But still she is not and cannot be the chosen one as Jesus is. He has everything about him to render him altogether worthy of this honour; she has nothing but what makes her utterly unworthy of it. It is not for what is good in her, either known or foreknown, that she is chosen, for what is there in her but evil? What has she to boast of as her heritage but sin? What has she to tell of in reference to herself but *sin*:—sin all over, sin within and without, the whole head sick, the whole heart faint; a body of death, corruption, pollution, and loathsome deformity. Her birth and her nativity is of the land of Canaan; her father was an Amorite, her mother an Hittite; in the day that she was born she was cast out into the open field, to the loathing of her person, "polluted in her blood."<sup>3</sup> What claim had she? Yet she was chosen! Notwithstanding all her unworthiness, she was chosen! O, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,—how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! O, the exceeding riches of His *grace*! For it is through

<sup>1</sup> Song v. 9—16; Ps. xlv. 2—7; Is. xxviii. 16; xlix. 1—7; Matt. xii. 18; 1 Peter ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jo. xvii. 2, 6, 11, 24; Rev. xvii. 14.   <sup>3</sup> Ezek. xvi. 1—6.



*grace* alone that she is chosen. Had it not been for this there could have been no hope for her. It was according to the eternal purpose of grace that she was chosen. It is grace that has made her to differ from the world in which she still abides. It is through grace that she is thus “known of God,”<sup>1</sup> and “apprehended of Christ Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> It was by “the grace of God that Christ tasted death” for her.<sup>3</sup> It is through grace that she believes.<sup>4</sup> It is through grace that she is saved, and has “good hope;”<sup>5</sup> for it is the God of grace who hath called her to His kingdom and glory,<sup>6</sup> and it is to the praise of the glory of His grace that she is predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of His will.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, though it is of grace, it is as sure and real as if it had been all of merit. She is as certainly and as unchangeably the object of the Father’s choice as Jesus is. No two beings could be chosen for more opposite reasons, yet still the *certainty* of the choice remains the same. Blessed thought! we are as sure of the Father’s love as Jesus is. “As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.....I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”<sup>8</sup> In His case, this love, this choice, cannot be altered, neither can it be in ours. Both are sure and unchangeable. Both are from eternity to eternity. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”<sup>9</sup>

But how is it possible that the Father’s choice can fix upon objects so entirely different from each other? How can the same Being choose the holy and the unholy, fixing upon both in the same eternal purpose, and embracing both in the same paternal arms? How is it that He can choose one object which possesses all excellence, and at the same time fix upon another which possesses none? To this we can give but a poor imperfect answer. We know not aright *how* all this can be: and we may well stand amazed to think that so it really is! What shall we say, but “even so,

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 9.<sup>2</sup> Phil. iii. 12.<sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 9.<sup>4</sup> Acts xviii. 27.<sup>5</sup> 2 Thes. ii. 16.<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. v. 10.<sup>7</sup> Eph. i. 5, 6.<sup>8</sup> Jo. xv. 9; xvii. 26.<sup>9</sup> 1 Jo. iii. 2.

Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The mind of God is beyond all measurement or comprehension of ours. The heart of God is a depth too deep for us to fathom. Its streams of love flow down freely to us, and we drink and are refreshed. But its hidden springs of affection and choice are altogether inaccessible to us. The *how* and the *why* we cannot reason out or comprehend. We shall know something of those secrets of love hereafter, but here we only see through a glass darkly. Yet the *fact* itself is plainly revealed. God has set His heart at once upon the most worthy and the most unworthy beings in the universe, embracing both extremities in his mysterious choice. Of this we are assured; and it is a thought as blessed as it is true. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."<sup>1</sup>

But how is God righteous in so doing? Is there not something here like inconsistency? Does it not seem as if He were indifferent to the character of the objects chosen, caring little whether they were holy or unholy, since He thus fixes upon the best and the worst at the same time? By no means. His choosing Christ shows that He is not indifferent to the objects chosen. In choosing him He shows how He prizes perfection, and how He delights in it. Having given this proof of his infinite love of goodness and holiness, no one can mistake his doings in reference to others. Whatever may be his reason, it cannot be indifference to sin or a want of regard to righteousness. He has put this matter beyond a doubt, by making THE RIGHTEOUS ONE the object of his supreme and everlasting choice. And having done this, who shall charge him with inconsistency in choosing whom He will? Is He not at liberty to fix upon the most unholy without being charged with indifference to sin?

Having found an object infinitely worthy of his choice, and set his heart on him, may He not make his choice of others depend upon reasons best known to himself, without the imputation of unrighteousness? Were He indeed to choose them, and allow them to remain unholy, this charge would be well-founded. But though He finds them unholy, He does not leave them so. He chooses them that they

<sup>1</sup> 1 Jo, iv. 10.

may be holy.<sup>1</sup> In their sanctification He displays his love of holiness. His object is that they may be delivered from their sinfulness, and conformed to the image of his Chosen One. And thus it is seen that it is still holiness that He is seeking, and on which He has set his heart. In all things He manifests that his is a holy choice, even though fixed upon the unholy. What a motive for us to seek holiness! It is to this that we are called. It is this that is enjoined upon us, "be ye holy, for I am holy."

This choice is said to be *in* Christ Jesus. Let us mark this expression, *in* Christ Jesus. The saints are chosen *in* *him* before the foundation of the world. Had He not been chosen, they would never have been so. It is because He is chosen that they are chosen in him from eternity. It is the Father's choice of the worthiest that enables him to choose the unworthiest. It is this that makes it a righteous thing for him to do so. *In* him they are chosen, as if forming part of himself, so that they are, if we may say so, lost in him,—so identified with him that they appear as one with him. They seem never to be known of the Father, nor to know themselves, save in connection with him. If they go back to eternity, they see themselves in connection with him. If they look at their history here, they see their connection with him,—dying, buried, rising, ascending, with him. If they gaze forward into eternity, then also they see themselves still in connection with him. One with him in the Father's purpose; one with him in his death and resurrection; one with him in his kingdom hereafter, when He comes again in his glory to make all things new.

This is our security and joy. Jesus is the Father's Chosen One! Let us rejoice and be glad in this. The Father has found an object worthy of his choice. This is the foundation on which we build, a foundation broad enough for us to build upon here, and to rest upon for ever. Let us sing the new song, "saying, with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."<sup>2</sup> This chosen of the Father is our chosen too! Chosen in him from eternity, we have been brought to choose him, by that Holy Spirit who quickeneth the dead

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 4; Col. i. 22; iii. 12; 2 Tim. i. 9.    <sup>2</sup> Rev. v. 12.

and changes enmity into love. Whom have we in heaven but him? "His love is better than wine."<sup>1</sup> "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is our beloved among the sons."<sup>2</sup> We have ravished his heart, and He hath ravished ours.<sup>3</sup> "His countenance is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven, his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."<sup>4</sup> And weary with his long absence from us, and unable any longer to brook delay, we take up the Church's longing supplication, "make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."<sup>5</sup>

It is because there is such a Chosen One that there is hope for the undeserving and ungodly. Sinners! there is hope for you. The Father hath found a Chosen One, in whom his soul delighteth, and because of this He is willing to take you in, and make you partakers of his love. Because this Chosen One has deserved everything, therefore it is a righteous thing in God to give eternal life to you who have deserved nothing. Because this Chosen One has glorified the Father, therefore his love can flow freely out to you, even though the chief of sinners. Did you but see Christ as the Father's Chosen One, you would see what full provision this makes for your forgiveness and peace. Had there been no Chosen One in whom the Father's soul could rest, there would have been no hope of rest for you. Had there been no Chosen One there could have been no accepted sacrifice, no precious blood, no magnified law, no justifying righteousness—no hope at all for any sinner. But now there is hope, certain hope, for such as you, even though the guiltiest on this side of hell, because there is such a Chosen One as Jesus, the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. The more you realize of the infinite excellence of Jesus, the more you will understand the true foundation of a sinner's peace. The more you see in Jesus what the Father sees in Him, the more will you comprehend the glad tidings of great joy concerning Him, and learn to rejoice and sing "unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." Oh, come and share this joy. You are welcome. Tarry not a moment, lest the open door be closed

<sup>1</sup> Song i. 2.    <sup>2</sup> ii. 3.    <sup>3</sup> iv. 9.    <sup>4</sup> v. 11, 15.    <sup>5</sup> viii. 14.



for ever. Strange that the Chosen of the Father should not be your chosen too! Strange that the Chosen of God should be the rejected of men! Yet so it is! Oh, sinner, is it always so to be? Are you to stumble upon this stumbling-stone laid in Zion, till you stumble into hell?

“Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious, but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.”

“WHOSOEVER SHALL FALL ON THIS STONE SHALL BE BROKEN, BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL IT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER.”

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### HYMN.

SAVED from the awful guilt of sin  
By Him who bare the cross;  
We'll now a cheerful strain begin  
Where God began with us.

We sing the vast unmeasured grace,  
Of height and depth untold,  
Which did the saints elect embrace,  
As sheep within the fold.

We had not known the blood for sin,  
Nor sweets of pardoning love,  
Unless our worthless names had been  
Enrolled for life above.

Well may we sing, since bought with blood  
Of God's eternal Son:  
Oh, how secure God's purpose stood  
Ere time its race begun.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE LAST TIME.

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*"Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time."*—1 Jo. ii. 18.

*"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*—JAMES v. 8.

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THE Apostle John, in the first of these passages, tells us, that the last time was begun in his days. It was going on when he wrote. The Apostle Peter tells us, that the last days were to end in the coming of the Lord, as we read throughout the whole of the third chapter of his Second Epistle. We thus discover the beginning and end of the period so often spoken of in Scripture as the last days. Its beginning was in the Lord's first coming and its end was in His second coming. The whole period between His first and second comings is called by this name.

Now, what was to be the character of these days? Was it to be good or evil? Evil, undoubtedly, to the very last. John tells us, that the special mark of these times was to be the prevalence of Antichrists. The last days were to be the times wherein Antichrist should have sway. They were not to be Christian but Antichristian in their character. There were to be "many Antichrists," but, as they drew near their close, there was to be One Great Power—one great adversary of God and His Christ exercising dominion. He is called Antichrist! The Antichristian tendencies began to show themselves even in the Apostles' days. They have gone on since then, showing themselves in many different forms. But as the days draw near their close, there is to be one great Antichrist, more hateful, more blasphemous, more atheistical, and more powerful and extensive in his sway than any heretofore. He is to rise up in awful strength and cruelty, in daring defiance of God and hatred of His people, till he be utterly destroyed by the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

That the *whole period* between the First and Second Comings of Christ is evil and not good, may be shown from many passages, both of the Old and New Testament. We

select a few. Our Lord, when answering the questions of his disciples about his coming, and the signs of it,<sup>1</sup> makes no mention of any thing but wars and wickedness, tribulation and sorrows, onward without interval or cessation, until his coming. So far were these from ceasing, as the time of his coming drew on, they were to increase and grow worse as time went on. Iniquity was to abound, and the love of many wax cold. The time before his coming was to be like that before the deluge; like Noah's days, when wickedness overflowed, or like the days of Lot, when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed.

Paul, when speaking of the last days, tells us that they were to be wholly evil.<sup>2</sup> "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come." And he adds, that so far from their growing better, they are to increase unto more ungodliness; "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." He tells us, moreover, in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians, that the "man of sin" had begun to work even in his own days, that it would go on increasing more and more, until the appearing of the Lord, and that then, but not till then, would it be overthrown;—"whom the Lord shall consume by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy by the brightness of his coming." It is plain, then, that the whole period called the last days, the period between the First and Second Comings of the Lord, was to be one of Antichristian wickedness and tyranny.

Daniel also gives us a description of this period. First, under the symbol of a great image, he sets before us the history of the empires which were to exist, until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands falls on the toes of the image,—that is, upon the Roman empire in its divided state, which stone must refer to the Second, and not to the First Coming of Christ, as that empire was not divided in that manner till long after the First Coming of Christ. Under the symbol of the four beasts, he gives us another picture of the times of Gentile oppression and wickedness. These times began in the prophet's days, and they are to continue till the Second Coming of Christ. This is plain from the prophet's description. First, the Babylonish empire rises up into power, and then passes away. Then the Persian empire succeeds, and passes away. Then the Ma-

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Lu. xxi.   <sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

cedonian empire succeeds, and passes away. Then the Roman empire follows, and is still in existence, and shall continue so, says the prophet, until the fifth or last kingdom comes,—the kingdom of Christ and his saints. “I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days; and they brought him near before him: and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.” Thus we learn that the whole period called the times of the Gentiles, is to be one of oppression and ungodliness, and wearing out the saints of the Most High, and that this period does not end till the Second Coming of the Lord.

During all this period of the last days, the Church of Christ is to be a “little flock,”—a small and despised remnant; like Noah in the days before the flood, like Lot in Sodom, like Abraham among the Canaanites, like Israel in Egypt, like the captives in Babylon, like the early Christians at Rome and Corinth. Her present state is to be one of oppression and persecution by the world. She is an injured and afflicted widow, having none to vindicate her cause on earth against the cruelty of her adversaries. Her clothing is sackcloth, and her only crown the crown of thorns. Hence all the promises of Scripture, especially of the New Testament, take for granted this afflicted state. They suppose that she is to continue in that state until her Lord and Master come. In the Bridegroom’s absence the Spouse mourns and weeps. Consolation is administered, and promise upon promise is given to sustain her during the absence of her Lord. But all these consolations point forward to a time when the Bridegroom shall come, and the Church shall no longer sit desolate and sad. Till *He* come, however, she has no promise of deliverance from her widowhood and sorrow. Till *He* come, her tribulation does not end nor her triumph begin. These “exceeding great and precious promises” are to uphold her in the day of her sorrow, and to be as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise. Hence it is to his coming that she is looking as her blessed hope. It is for his arrival that she is waiting with such longing expectation, wearying for the times of the restitution of all things, and saying,—“Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Song viii. 14.



Meanwhile, she has the Holy Spirit dwelling in her, as “the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” She walks by faith, and not by sight, and her faith is to her the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Saved by grace, and assured of her salvation in believing, she has peace with God, and learns to glory in tribulation. Resting on the free love of God to her, in Christ Jesus her Lord, she is “always confident,” knowing that when *He* who is her life shall appear, she shall appear with Him in glory. Having received a kingdom that cannot be moved as her promised portion, she holds fast that grace of God which she believed at first, and serves God with reverence and godly fear, looking for and hasting to the day of God, when that kingdom shall be her’s in possession, as it is now her’s in promise.

It is this hope that separates her from the world. It is a hope of which it knows nothing. It is so sure, so free, and so glorious, that it cannot even conceive of it aright. Hence there can be no community of feeling between the world and her. She is a stranger and a pilgrim here, and has nothing in common with the world at all. Many things mark her out as peculiar, but her *hope* especially does this,—this hope she holds fast, knowing that it shall not be put to shame. And as the last days draw nearer to their close, and her hope brightens and approaches, she seeks to walk more and more worthy of her calling. She comes out from the world more entirely, and fixes her eye and soul more intently upon the glory which is so soon to be revealed. The thickening darkness of the last days is to her the sign of coming dawn,—the forerunner of the long-expected kingdom. As the clouds grow denser and more threatening she lifts up her head, knowing that her redemption draweth nigh.

KELSO, *April*, 1845.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

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*"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."*—ROM. 1. 16.

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WE have had frequent occasion to state the Gospel itself. We have showed that it is glad tidings of great joy concerning Jesus Christ, "the only begotten Son of God, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we by His poverty might be rich." We have showed that he who believeth is justified from all from which law could never justify him,—that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." We have showed that this forgiveness is a *sure* thing,—sure to him that believeth, so that there is no need for doubt or uncertainty,—sure to him that believeth, not because better than others, but simply because he believeth. Our object at present is to bring before our readers some instances of the *power* of the Gospel,—to show its blessed results, so that men may see that it is a real thing, and that its blessings are *present realities*.

We have had frequent occasion to observe cases in which the effects of a believed Gospel were slowly and gradually brought out,—perhaps one after the other successively in the course of years,—so that we could only gather its results from the summary of a whole lifetime, and this, perhaps, after all only imperfectly in fragments, so that the true nature and effects of the Gospel were not fully seen. In such cases, it might be supposed naturally enough that it was not simply the believed Gospel that wrought the happy consequences, but the gradual inward process going on in the soul, which, in the course of years, produced joy and peace. By this means, the real nature of the Gospel is often misunderstood, and a series of self-righteous doings and feelings substituted in its place. Thus, people are kept in darkness and bondage from supposing it necessary that

it should be so, and that a long period must elapse ere the Gospel can take effect, and till they can hope to experience its joys or taste the blessedness of knowing assuredly that they are forgiven.

It might be enough to point to all the believers mentioned in the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles contain the records of thousands of cases in which the Gospel took *immediate* effect, and not one in which its blessings were indefinitely postponed, and they who believed it left in darkness and disquietude. What better instances can we have than those, of the immediate and most blessed results of a believed Gospel. No man can gainsay these. They are so plain and so explicit. And then they are instances recorded by an unerring pen. From all these we learn beyond a doubt that the Gospel, as soon as received, brings along with it into the soul joy and peace,—light and gladness,—the very sunshine of Heaven. Now, if the Gospel wrought such blessed effects in those days, then why not *now*? What should hinder the same joy and peace from taking immediate possession of the soul that believeth? It is the same Gospel still. It contains the same free message of peace. It presents the same glad welcome to the sinner. There is the same Saviour still; the same precious blood—the same justifying death—the same peace-speaking cross—the same perfect righteousness. There is the same Holy Spirit working as of old, with an arm that has not been shortened, and with a power as able to quicken and save as of old. Surely, then, there must be something widely wrong if they who profess to receive the glad tidings are still left in sorrow,—nay, think it right to remain in that state, or even count it presumption to rejoice.

We know not a better way of settling this point than by adducing some modern instances, from which it is plain that to some at least among us the Gospel has lost none of its former power and gladness; and that some in our own day have found it as glad and glorious a Gospel as did those who heard it warm from the lips of the Apostles. This will show that the blessed effects immediately following upon its belief are still manifested among us, and that to them who receive the Word of God concerning his Son simply and as little children, it is still, as of old, a record of gladness,—dispelling all darkness, and filling the soul with light. Take, first of all, the following instance. It is from a small

work, called *St Helena Memoirs*. It is an instance very much to our present purpose, and a most interesting case indeed. The narrator was conversing with an officer who was a Deist. In the room, and hard by, there was a young man, listening to all that was said. The conversation passed on from a discussion on Deism to a simple statement of Gospel truths. But the narrator himself must tell us what these were:—"I began, as I usually did, at the universal depravity of man, his need of regeneration and a Saviour, the nature of conversion, instancing the jailor, Lydia, the thief, &c., and proving that when convinced of sin nothing prevented our instantaneous pardon and acceptance to eternal life in Christ Jesus but our own wilful unbelief. I showed the madness of looking to any works, either of repentance or any thing else, as a condition to perform before we can venture to believe or hope to be pardoned; and then dwelt upon the Scripture way of justifying the ungodly through faith alone, and instantaneously on believing. Then I dwelt on the richness, freeness, and sovereignty of grace." Such were the truths stated, and in conversation merely—conversation not directly pointed at the individual affected. They were just the common Gospel truths—nothing more:—man's lost estate,—the free salvation through the cross.

Now, mark the results, and see what a simply-spoken Gospel can do. In a short time he began to observe that though the Deist was unmoved, the young man was in tears. He sat weeping, as if utterly absorbed in what he was hearing, and unconscious that others saw him. He seemed most affected by what was said about the salvation being immediate, and that nothing prevented him being pardoned that moment but his own unbelief. Soon after the conversation ended. The narrator and the young man were left alone for the night. As soon as they were left there alone, he took the young man by the hand, and again spoke to him in the fulness of his heart. He was utterly overpowered. He seemed overwhelmed with the deep conviction, and drowned in tears, till it seemed as if he were becoming ill. The free grace of God was then dwelt upon, and the Gospel again set before him. Suddenly his tears ceased to flow. All sorrow fled, and joy unspeakable took possession of his soul. But we must here give the very words of the narrator:—"We had committed ourselves in prayer to God, and lain down to rest; and now I remem-



ber a scene occurred which I shall never forget. It was this. His agony of sorrow had ceased, and now an agony of joy so possessed his soul that several times I thought he would have expired. I tried to allay it, but in vain. He *would* go on crying out in the most soul-piercing expressions, addressed to Jesus Christ. He wished to die,—then, —that moment,—and be with Christ, crying out, ‘O blessed Jesus, thou hast saved me—me, a great sinner, a child of wrath;—thou hast saved me this night,—thou hast given me eternal life and glory;—I shall never perish;—oh, never, never;—thou hast made me thy child for ever and ever;—Jesus is my Saviour, God is my God.—O blessed, blessed boundless love;—boundless grace and mercy. O love, love, what boundless love to me;—an heir of Heaven, —justified,—glorified! Oh, it is too much to bear. O blessed Jesus, help me, help me to bear this agony, or I shall die. Oh, support me, or take my spirit to thyself, that I may bear it. Oh, take me now,—take me this night, that I may be delivered from this great agony of joy, and be with thee for ever and ever!’ In this strain he continued for nearly an hour. I saw I could do nothing. Finding him much exhausted, I got up and tried to stop him from speaking any more, but he burst out again, and then I thought that his soul *had* fled, and that that Saviour to whom he cried in his transport had taken his Spirit to himself. After this, he became more composed, and sank to sleep. I watched over him. He seemed an angel slumbering in bliss. In the morning he was quite composed, and in a heavenly frame of soul; and really his countenance and manner seemed as if his spirit had been absent from the body and present with the Lord in paradise, where he had heard unutterable things, and had just returned again to this lower world of sin and sorrow. The great tide of rapture had now subsided, and peace, joy, and love seemed to breathe forth from him on all around.”

Such are the immediate effects of a believed Gospel! And what it did for one it would do for all. It is as full of joy to each of us. But we put the full cup of gladness from our lips, and think it humility to taste it drop by drop! It is unbelief that mars our joy, and so misrepresents the glad tidings as to strip them of all their joy. They would gladden were they but believed. But who hath believed our report?

But take another instance of the power of the believed Gospel. It is from the same volume. The individual referred to had been visited with sickness, and, until that, had not only not known the Gospel, but nothing of the Bible at all. God blessed the words of a dear friend to him on his sick-bed, and the change was most wonderful. His weakness prevented his being taught by man. But he was taught from above, and grew rapidly in grace, manifesting the most childlike simplicity and faith in God. It is said of him, "His faith appeared to have no mixture of imperfection in it, for he simply and sincerely took for granted all that God had said in his Word, and was astonished to hear any of us express our want of assurance of faith or conscious sense of our interest in Christ. This to him was a mystery which we could never explain, and which, happily for himself, he died in entire ignorance of."

Take another case,—that of Colonel Gardiner. He had been arrested in his ungodliness by the voice of God, and thrown into deep anguish. His deliverance came thus:—

"Within about two months after his first memorable change he began to perceive some secret dawns of more cheerful hope—that, vile as he then saw himself to be, he might nevertheless obtain mercy through a Redeemer; and at length, about the end of October, 1719, he found all the burden of his mind taken off at once by the powerful impression of that memorable scripture upon his mind; (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) 'Whom God hath set forth for a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.'

"He had used to imagine, that the justice of God required the damnation of so enormous a sinner as he saw himself to be; but now he was made deeply sensible, that the divine justice might be not only vindicated but glorified, in saving him by the blood of Jesus, even that blood which cleanseth from all sin. He was led to see the riches of redeeming love and grace, in such a manner as not only engaged him, with the utmost pleasure and confidence, to venture his soul upon them; but even swallowed up (as it were) his whole heart in the returns of love, which, from that blessed time, became the genuine and delightful principle of obedience, and animated him, with an enlarged heart, to run the ways of God's commandments. Thus

God was pleased (as he himself used to speak) in an hour to turn his captivity. All the terrors of his former state were turned into unutterable joy. And though the first ecstasies of it afterwards subsided into a more calm and composed delight, yet were the impressions so deep and so permanent, that he declared, on the word of a Christian and a friend, wonderful as it might seem, that, for about seven years after this, he enjoyed nearly a heaven upon earth. His soul was almost continually filled with a sense of the love of God in Christ; so that from the time of his waking in the morning, his heart was rising to God, and triumphing in him."

Or take another less known. A naval officer was disputing with a pious lady about the necessity of the Spirit's teaching. He denied such a thing. She simply replied, "It is so." "And while," says he, "the feeling was still contemptuously curling my lip, in an instant it gave way to a joy of heart, which I cannot describe in any other way than by what would have been the state of my mind, if she could have persuaded me that I had received the Holy Spirit, and also that her assertions alluded to, were really true. It was a clear and sensible perception of the love of God in the work of Jesus Christ, without, however, being able at the time of giving any definite reason for the conviction. But that was not called for at the time, as eye saw not the effect, neither did ear hear it.

"We went in the afternoon to a chapel, where it pleased the Lord that the clergyman should read and expound the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Every sentence that he uttered was as a river of living water poured into my soul. It was then, for the first time in my life, that I saw with the spiritual eye that blessed being who 'was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.' It was in that hour that I saw a reconciled God in the Lord Jesus Christ. O, it was a joy unspeakable and full of glory! From that day a treasure in the book of the living God has been unfolded to me, and on that day the seal was broken."

Or take again a remarkable instance recorded in the life of Lady Huntingdon,—that of Dr Conyers, minister at Helmsley, in the last century. He was almost a Socinian when he began his ministry. His conversion was very remarkable—

While reading the lesson for the day in the public ser-

vice at the church, the expression of St Paul (Eph. iii. 8) —‘The unsearchable riches of Christ,’ made a deep impression upon his mind. On this scripture he was involuntarily led to reflect—‘*The unsearchable riches of Christ!*’—‘I never found, I never knew that there were unsearchable riches in *Him!*’ Accustomed to consider the Gospel as extremely simple and intelligible, he was surprised that the Apostle should assert that the riches of Christ were *unsearchable*. Immediately he concluded that his sentiments and experience must be entirely dissimilar to that of the Apostle. Deep convictions accompanied these reflections, and his trouble was not a little increased by considering that if he himself was wrong in the fundamental articles of religion, he must also, by his mode of preaching, have misguided his flock, to the great prejudice of their souls.

At length the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner is attended with success, and on the 25th of December, 1758, while walking in his room, in a pensive frame, he was led to contemplate those two passages of Scripture, Heb. ix. 22—‘Without shedding of blood there is no remission,’ and John i. 7—‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.’ The mists of ignorance were instantaneously dissipated, and finding that he could centre his hopes in the atoning blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, he became the immediate partaker of real and ineffable joy.

“I went up stairs and down again (said he,) backwards and forwards in my room, clapping my hands for joy, and crying out, *I have found him—I have found him—I have found him, whom my soul loveth*, and for a little time, as the Apostle said, whether in the body or out of it, I could hardly tell.”

Or take another striking narrative from the same work, —the account of Lady Huntingdon’s own conversion. She was conversing one day with a relative, Lady Margaret Hastings, who had been lately brought to Christ. This lady told Lady H. that “since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ she had been as happy as an angel.” This went like an arrow to her soul. Deep conviction of sin followed. A dangerous illness deepened the conviction, and her misery was great. At length she was brought to rest on Christ, and found peace in believing—

Now the day began to dawn. Jesus the Sun of Righteousness arose, and burst in meridian splendour on



her benighted soul. The scales fell from her eyes, and opened a passage for the light of life which sprang in, and death and darkness fled before it. Viewing herself as a brand plucked from the burning, she could not but stand astonished at the mighty power of that grace which saved her from eternal destruction, just when she stood upon its very brink, and raised her from the gates of hell to the confines of heaven; and the depths from which she was raised, made the heights which she had reached only the more amazing; she felt the rock beneath her, and from that secure position looked with astonishment, downward, to that horrible pit from which she was so mercifully delivered—and upwards, in ecstasy, to that glory to which she should be raised. The ‘sorrow of the world, which worketh death,’ was now exchanged for that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto life; and ‘joy unspeakable, and full of glory,’ succeeded that bitterness that comes of the conviction of sin; she enjoyed, already, a delightful foretaste of heaven.

Or take the following brief account of the conversion of Mr Mills, one of the great promoters of Missions to America—

The spiritual career of this devoted servant of Christ and the church commenced in the following manner: When about fifteen years of age, his attention was specially directed to the great concerns of the soul. For two full years he continued in a state of anxiety, quarrelling with the sovereignty of God, and often wishing that he had never been born. One morning, as he was about to leave home, to return to school in a neighbouring town, his pious mother took an opportunity of inquiring into the state of his mind, and begged him to make an ingenuous disclosure of his feelings.

For a moment he was silent, and wept; but his heart was too full long to suppress the emotions produced by so affecting a request. He raised his head, and, with eyes streaming with tears, exclaimed, ‘O that I had never been born! O that I had never been born! For two years I have been sorry God ever made me.’ What reply could such a mother make to such a disclosure? It was given her in that same hour what she should speak: ‘My son,’ said she, ‘you *are* born, and you can never throw off your existence, nor your everlasting accountability for all your

conduct.' This heavy thought was like a dagger to his soul. His mother expressed her fears that he had never thoroughly seen the evil of his own heart, and that he had much to learn before he was acquainted with himself: to which he ventured to say, '*I have seen*—to the very bottom of hell!' With this frame of mind, he took a melancholy leave of his parents for the winter.

The farewell to his mother drove her to her knees. There is such a thing as special faith in prayer. It was such to this dear saint, when she went to plead for her poor son. She did not leave her closet, till she found the full relief she sought, and till her mind was confidently assured that God would remember mercy for her child! On that very morning, it pleased the Holy Ghost, as she afterwards ascertained, to knock off the chains from this unhappy prisoner, and introduce him into the liberty of the sons of God! He had not gone far, before he had such a view of the perfections of God, that he wondered he had never seen their beauty and glory before. There was nothing in God now which distressed him. He had lost all his opposition to the Divine sovereignty; and such were his views of this adorable perfection, that he could not refrain from exclaiming, 'O glorious sovereignty! O glorious sovereignty!' He retired a small distance into the woods, that he might be the more at liberty to contemplate the character of God, and adore and extol his holy and amiable sovereignty: but he here saw so much of God, that his mind was almost lost in the overwhelming manifestation. The scene was altogether new. There was a wonderful change either in God or in him. Everything was gilded with light and glory; and now and then, as he gazed at the splendour and majesty of the Divine character, he would still exclaim, 'O glorious sovereignty!' It does not appear that in all this he was bribed into acquiescence. His mind was so constantly occupied in viewing the perfections of God, and in meditating on His word and works, and so continued for several weeks, that he did not think of himself with any degree of concern.

Or, lastly, take the following sketch of the conversion of the famous Mr Fuller—

"One morning," says he, "I think in November, 1769, I walked out by myself with an unusual load of guilt upon my conscience. The remembrance of my sin, not only on

the past evening, but for a long time back, the breach of my vows, and the shocking termination of my former hopes and affections, all uniting together, formed a burden which I knew not how to bear. The reproaches of a guilty conscience seemed like the gnawing worm of hell. I do not write in the language of exaggeration. I now know that the sense which I then had of the evil of sin and the wrath of God, was very far short of the truth; but yet it seemed more than I was able to sustain. In reflecting upon my broken vows, I saw that there was no truth in me. I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell, and that to hell I must go, unless I were saved of mere grace, and as it were in spite of myself. I felt that if God were to forgive me all my past sins, I should again destroy my soul, and that in less than a day's time. I never before knew what it was to feel myself an odious, lost sinner, standing in need of both pardon and purification. I knew not what to do! In this state of mind, as I was moving slowly on, I thought of the resolution of Job, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' I paused, and repeated the words over and over. Each repetition seemed to kindle a ray of hope, mixed with a determination, *if I might*, to cast my perishing soul upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, to be both pardoned and purified; for I felt that I needed the one as much as the other. In this way I continued above an hour, weeping and supplicating mercy for the Saviour's sake: (my soul hath it still in remembrance, and is humbled in me!) and as the eye of the mind was more and more fixed upon him, my guilt and fears were gradually and insensibly removed. I now found rest for my troubled soul.

"When I thought of my past life, I abhorred myself, and repented as in dust and ashes; and when I thought of the gospel way of salvation, I drank it in as cold water is imbibed by a thirsty soul. My heart felt one with Christ, and dead to every other object around me.

"From this time, my former wicked courses were forsaken. I had no manner of desire after them. They lost their influence upon me. To those evils, a glance at which before would have set my passions in a flame, I now felt no inclination. 'My soul' (said I, with joy and triumph) 'is as a weaned child!' I now knew, experimentally, what it was to be dead to the world by the cross of Christ, and to

feel an habitual determination to devote my future life to God my Saviour.”

Such are a few instances of the power of the Gospel. They tend very strikingly to show both its real nature and its effects upon the soul when believed. From them let us gather a few things.

1. The Gospel is just good news about God and his Son Jesus Christ. It is not good news about myself,—but simply and solely about God and Christ. It tells me of the exceeding riches of the grace of God. It tells me that there is salvation for me,—salvation to the uttermost through the cross and blood of God’s beloved Son.

2. We see that the believing of these good news brings peace to the soul. It is not the believing, coupled with something else in us ;—it is simply this believing that gladdens. That which brings joy to the sinner is what the Holy Spirit shews him in Christ. There he sees fulness,—infinite fulness,—fulness most suitable for a sinner,—fulness free to all,—fulness pressed upon him. And it is this that gladdens him.

3. We see that it is *IN* believing that there is joy and peace. There is not merely joy as the fruit of believing, but joy *in* believing. It is not joy as the result of examining my faith and summing up my evidences ; but it is joy *in* believing. For in these instances there was no time for evidences to manifest themselves, there was no time for self-examination at all.

4. We see that there is no long period nor laborious process required to be undergone before peace is obtained. In some of these cases, indeed, there was a protracted time of conviction ; but it is evident that the length of time had nothing to do with the subsequent peace. It is clear from these that the Gospel is fitted and designed to bring us immediate peace, and if it does not do this the reason is because it is not believed !

5. It is of the utmost moment to press an *immediate* salvation upon the sinner. He is bent upon delay, and he tries to make himself believe that forgiveness is something far off,—something which he can only attain after a long struggle of fears and doubts. Hence the necessity for insisting upon the *present* peace which the Gospel is intended



to bring, and to press upon the sinner's conscience the urgent and imperative command of God, to believe without one moment's delay. It is this urgency which the Holy Spirit owns and blesses for the conversion of sinners, and the comfort of the doubting. In nothing that God commands does he admit of one moment's delay or hesitation in obeying it, and woe be to us if we lead any sinner to suppose that he is at liberty to wait one single moment before believing the Gospel.

It has been always Satan's object to cloud the Gospel, so as to make it appear not to be the blessed gladdening thing which it was in the days of the Apostles. And hence there is a necessity for jealousy in regard to this. And it is very useful to point back to some such instances of its peace-giving power and say to all gainsayers "such is the Gospel." See its nature ;—see its freeness ;—see its fruits ;—see the peace it brings.

"Now the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing that we may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

KELSO, OCTOBER, 1845.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## TRIBULATION.

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*“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: Be zealous, therefore, and repent.”—REV. III. 19.*

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THE washing of a vessel supposes that there is some soil or stain upon it which requires to be removed. There would be no need for washing were it not for this. It would be labour lost to him who washes, and, perchance, also serious injury to the vessel.

The casting of gold or silver into the furnace implies that there is dross upon them to be thus purged out by fire. There would be no need for fire, or furnace, or refiner's labour, were there no dross. It is the dross that makes the necessity for these. They are but means for getting quit of it.

So with chastisement. It supposes SIN. Were it not for sin, chastisement would be unknown. In heaven there is no chastisement, for there is no sin. Angels know nothing of it, for they know no sin. And in the coming Kingdom, when all things are made new, there shall be no chastisement, for there shall be no sin. It is only where there is sin that there is chastisement. There being such a thing as chastisement on earth, is just God saying, “I have found iniquity there.” And God's sending chastisement to an individual, is just his saying, “I have seen sin in thee.”

But more than this. Chastisement implies a determination to get quit of sin. It is not merely God's saying there is sin on thee, but also his adding, “I must purge it away; I cannot allow it to remain on thee.” It is God's expression of his deep interest in us and his paternal anxiety for our welfare. To make us clean is what he seeks; and this he is resolved to accomplish at any cost. It must be done, for he is holy. It must be done, for he loveth us. Sin must be got quit of whatever pain or sorrow it may require to effect it. What is pain if it expels sin? What is sorrow if it purges away the evil of our nature, or a lifetime's gathered dross?

But chastisement is something more peculiar still. In

one sense, it may be said that all the woes and wretchedness of earth are intended to drive men from their sins.

God is thus speaking to *all*. He is thus warning all. He is pleading with men to turn from iniquity and seek his face. He embitters all sin,—he embitters all pleasure,—he fastens sorrow upon everything beneath the sun, that he may lead men to repentance and salvation. In this general way he is addressing all. To every sinner upon the broad earth he is speaking and saying “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die.” Every pang that shoots through the frame, and makes the flesh to quiver, is a message from God. Every sorrow that shades the brow and saddens the eye is a message from God to a sinning, suffering world. They speak to sinners not only of the holiness of God, but of the exceeding riches of his grace and of his deep and affectionate interest in their welfare.

But, strictly speaking, this is not *chastisement*. Chastisement is something more special and peculiar in its nature and design than this. It is the strictly paternal dealing of God with the members of his own redeemed family. It takes for granted the family relationship. It is a family word,—a household name. For thus the Apostle teaches us :—“Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ; but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” (Heb. xii. 5–8.)

There is then a necessity for chastisement. It is part of the children’s portion here. It is the family discipline, and no member of the redeemed family from the beginning has ever been without it in some measure or form. It is one of the family badges, and as such has been worn from generation to generation by all the children. Not that they are a sad and wretched company. No : They “greatly rejoice, even though now if need be, they are in heaviness through manifold temptation.” There is no joy like theirs, no peace like theirs. Yet they have sorrow too. There is the tear in the eye, even when the calm smile is playing round the lip, and peace is shedding the serenity of its sunshine over the countenance. Their life is, as to most outward things, a sorrowful one ; but as to what is inward, it is full of peace. They are forgiven ; and that is peace. They are accepted

in the beloved ; and that is peace. They are delivered from a present evil world ; and that is peace. They have a rich inheritance in reversion ; and that is peace. Yet have they fightings without and fears within : they are “ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; poor, yet making many rich ; having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

Yes, chastisement is their lot on earth. It is through much tribulation that they must enter the kingdom of heaven. “ Many are the afflictions of the righteous.”

Now, why is this ? We are sure it is not in vain. God sends no needless sorrow to any of his children ; he afflicteth not willingly. It pains him to do it, if we may thus speak after the manner of men. Why, then, does he afflict ? Let us inquire into this. It much concerns us to understand this aright. For affliction misunderstood by the sufferer becomes doubly bitter and piercing. It then becomes not only unalleviated, but unprofitable sorrow.

Chastisement springs from love,—the deep love of God. Let us never forget this. It is love that fills and presents to us the cup of sorrow. Whether it is of mingled or unmingled bitterness, still it is love that pours it out :—the bitter as much as the sweet. The love that lets the child alone to do as he pleases is foolish love, if, indeed, it can be called love at all. But the love that restrains and chastises is deep, wise, tender love. It is from the very bottom of the loving heart that chastisement comes. Chastening love is, in truth, the deepest and most self-denying of all. Hence it shows us how much God is in earnest with us. It shows us what pains he is taking to bless us. It is in affliction that we see the strength and the earnestness of the love of God. This of itself may be enough to lead us to acquiesce in his dealings as all right and wise,—to say “ it is well ;” “ it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good ;” shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil ? But still it is well to inquire more particularly into God’s reasons for afflicting,—the ends he has in view in bringing us under the rod. For thus we shall not only be more fully satisfied that “ all is well,” but also learn particularly the lessons which God is seeking to teach us.

I. *Tribulation proves us.* We really do not know ourselves till trial comes. Of many a sin and many a weakness we are utterly ignorant till affliction brings them out



and exposes them to view. It was for this end that God led Israel into the wilderness to try them and to know what was in their hearts. Their desert-trials *proved* them that is, put them to the proof. And when thus proved, what iniquity was found in them that had lain hidden and unknown before ! The trial did not create the evil ; it did not make their hearts worse than before. It merely brought out what was there already, but had been lying unseen and unfelt, like a sleeping serpent. When Israel was thus tried, what worldliness came out ; what unbelief ; what rebellious murmuring against God ; what atheism and idolatry ; what self-will, self-confidence, and self-pleasing ! They could not have believed that such wickedness could be found in them, or that if their hearts did contain such evil, it could have lain concealed so long. Yet it never came out till then.

So with the saints still. God chastises them that he may prove them and bring out the evil that is within. And when the trial comes what a difference it makes ! The flesh, the old man, is cut to the quick, and forthwith arouses itself. When it was asleep, we did not know its strength and vitality ; but now that it has been wakened up, how fearful its still-remaining might ! The wind rises, the storm drives o'er us, the billows heave, and soon we know that we are but a troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. When all was calm, there seemed nought but purity, and ripple folded over ripple in the brightness of their transparent green. But the tempest stirs the depths, and all is changed. So with the soul even of the saints in its hours of tribulation and storm. The hidden evils come forth. Sins scarcely known before display themselves. The heart pours out its wickedness. Hard thoughts of God arise. Atheistical murmurings break out. Questionings both of his wisdom and his love are muttered. Distrust and unbelief assume the mastery. And what a scene the wretched soul presents ! All this was in us before, but we knew it not. It was needful that we should know it, and hence God sent the trial to bring it out. And thus are we led, on the one hand, into deeper views of our own exceeding sinfulness, and into fuller discoveries of the abounding grace of God. We learn to prize more than ever the open fountain ; and to shelter ourselves with more confident security under the righteousness of the righteous One.

Thus the Lord *proved* Job. He let loose the tempter :

He sent tribulation. And straightway the hidden evils of his heart come forth,—impatience, unbelief, self-righteousness. Then when the Lord has showed him these things, and led him to deeper views of sin, when he has searched him through and through, and made him to abhor himself; then he leads him to the blood of sprinkling, and sheds down anew the brightness of his gracious countenance, filling him with the joys of his salvation, and lifting up his head for ever.

II. *Tribulation purges us.* To be proved is one thing, to be purged is another. It is good to have the evil brought out, but it is better to have it taken away. The heat of the furnace burns out the dross, and leaves the gold behind. Now this is God's wish and aim. As he says to Israel so he speaks to us, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." Is. i. 25. And, again, "when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." Is. iv. 4.

Now there is not only much in us that requires to be taken away, but much that will yield to nothing, save chastisement. Other processes of discipline may remove a great deal, yet still there remains behind very much which nothing but trial and suffering will purge away. Some parts of the stone to be polished are so hard and rough, that heavy strokes are needed to smoothe them down. They resist every milder kind of treatment.

In some, worldliness is so strong that chastisement is needed. In others it is simply love of the creature. In others it is pride that needs to be abased. In others it is selfishness that needs to be eradicated. In others it is stubbornness and stoutness of heart. In others it is the desire of the honour that cometh from men,—man's love, man's approbation, man's smile. In others some idol needs to be broken in pieces. In others some creature comfort needs to be taken away lest we should settle down and be at ease. In others strong passions need to be broken down, or a froward will needs to be bent and subdued. These are some of the evils that need to be purged out of us. For the accomplishment of this, sometimes the trial is short, but sharp and pointed, going into the very vitals like a sword.

Sometimes it is long, protracted, heavy, bruising and crushing us with its weary ever-pressing weight. Different processes are required, some longer and some shorter; some a sudden stroke of the rod, others a continual thorn in the flesh :—some a quick cutting off of the diseased member, others a long-running issue to carry off the deep-seated malady. Yet all is wise and all is gracious. Love is the prompter in all, and perfect skill is the director of each operation or each blow. To deliver us from sin, and to make us partakers of his holiness, is God's one object throughout. Oh! deep deep must be the love which takes such pains with us. It is love of which we are altogether unworthy. Who are we that God should so deal with us? Surely if we are not worthy of comfort and prosperity, much less are we worthy of affliction.

III. *Tribulation rebukes us.* "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." It is God's way of pointing out what he sees amiss in us, calling our attention to it and condemning it. It is his way of saying, "I have somewhat against thee," or "I have not found thy works perfect before God." The rebuke of God is a solemn thing. It cannot be called anger, or a frown, or punishment; all these have passed away; from all these we are delivered for ever. Yet still there is something in the rebuke of God that should make us stand in awe. He rebukes the world, and it trembles and flees away in terror. But when he rebukes his saints, it is that they may draw near, though with reverence and godly fear. A parent's rebuke is much to a loving child, how much more is the rebuke of our God!

He administers many rebukes, some lighter, some severer. To the former especially we often give but little heed. The touch of transient pain; a few days' illness; a slight indisposition; a passing weakness; some common domestic care or vexation; the severance of friendship; some short parting from one we love; some unkindness where least we looked for it; some disappointment on which we were not calculating;—these are his fatherly rebukes. I do not here speak of the sharper and sorer ones, for we are not so apt to overlook them. They force themselves upon our notice. We cannot mistake them. But these briefer, commoner, slighter ones need to be pointed out; for they are so little recognized, so much undervalued or unheeded, as if the hand of God was not in each one of them; as if,

because they were so slight, so mild, so gentle, they were not to be owned as the laying on of a father's hand, but casual things, coming and going, we know not how or why.

I feel that this is a much-needed admonition to the saints of God, for the point adverted to is a much neglected one. Our continual tendency is to overlook any slight ailment or trouble as not worth noticing, and as not coming from God. We are thrown into a raging fever, till our life is despaired of; and in this we do not hesitate to own the finger of God. We take a slight cold or sustain some slight injury; and here the finger of God is oftentimes not perceived at all. The gentleness of the rebuke makes us forget that it comes from God! Strange! Should not its gentleness call forth immediate thanksgiving. Should not its gentleness be accepted as a new token of paternal love and care?

Ah it is thus that we provoke God to inflict heavier blows. We compel him to send the heavier chastisement by our inattention to the lighter. We make bitter trial absolutely necessary. We bring it upon ourselves. How gently God rebukes for a while! If we may speak after the manner of men, he just hints or whispers his reproof. He is most unwilling to chastise with severity. He tarries long. He tries other means. He sends milder trials, that we may be led to self-searching and repentance, and thus he will be spared the necessity of inflicting a heavier blow. But we trifle with his gentle rebukes, till he is constrained to lift up his voice and speak in a tone which can neither be mistaken nor overlooked. Oh how sad that we should thus, by our heedlessness and perversity, draw down upon us sorrows which God would fain have spared us! Let us learn the meaning and the use of small trials;—of slight rebukes. Let us count none too small or slight for our most serious thought. It will save us much. It will teach us many a blessed lesson in an easy, pleasant, gentle way.

IV. *Tribulation arouses us.* We often fall asleep. We dwell on the world's enchanted ground, and often, ere we are aware, we are soothed to sleep, forgetful of the quick passing time. And while we sleep, all goes wrong. Our faith waxes feeble; our love is chilled; our zeal cools down. We lose our earnestness, our boldness, our energy, our freshness, our simplicity. All our movements are those of a man but half-awake. Our schemes are carelessly



formed and drowsily carried into effect. With how many in our day is it thus?

But God will not have it so. He cannot allow such indolence and listlessness in his work. Such sloth makes but poor work either in a man's own soul or in his efforts for the souls of others. We must be awakened at whatever cost. He does it gently first. He causes us to hear some distant noise;—it may be the tumults of the nations, or it may be the tidings of some terrible disaster afar off. He means by this to awaken us out of our sleep. Perhaps this fails. Then he comes nearer and makes his voice to be heard in our own neighbourhood or within the circle of our kindred. This surely will arouse us! Perhaps not. Then he comes nearer still, for he cannot allow us to slumber away our precious hours. He speaks into our very ears. He smites us upon some tender part, till every fibre of our frame quivers, and every pulse beats quicker. Then we start up and wonder how we slept so long. But oh! how difficult is it sometimes to awake us! It takes many a stroke before we are thoroughly aroused.

Ah! let us beware of the world's enchanted ground. Many a saint has fallen asleep on it, and only been awakened by severest chastisement. Let us beware of sloth and ease, lest, being led on from step to step, we be overtaken by sleep which may yet cost us a bleeding,—it may be, almost a broken heart.

V. *Tribulation solemnizes us.* It is a gay world in which we live, and we are prone to fall into its levity. Around us are the sights and sounds of mirth by which a vain world is seeking to cheat away its ever-fretting uneasiness, or drown its deeper sorrows. Oftentimes the saints seem to catch the tone of levity and frivolity, making mirth with the most mirthful, jesting with the most foolish, singing the world's songs of vanity, and joining in its idle words, as if its friendships and its pleasures were not forbidden things. Apart, however, from the contagion of the world's influence, our tone is apt to fall low, and our deportment to lose that solidity and seriousness which becometh saints. We get light and airy; we give way to the current of vain thoughts; we do not set a guard upon our lips; foolish talking and jesting is too much indulged in, even among the children of God. Our words are not "with grace seasoned with salt." We forget the admonition "let no

corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." And this levity, this frivolous habit, grows upon us. Seriousness becomes a thing reserved entirely for the closet or the sanctuary. We grieve the Holy Spirit, who cannot dwell amid levity and mirth any more than amid profanity and crime. He retires from us, driven from his abode by the laughter and jesting with which we were making it resound. He can no longer dwell in a temple which, from being the house of God, we have turned into a hall of revelry, a haunt of mirth and song.

I do not mean that the saint is ever, even for a moment, to be gloomy. Gloom and melancholy are not the inmates of a soul that has tasted the joy of pardon, and is walking with a reconciled God in blessed light and love. No. He rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But still, as has been well said, "true joy is a serious thing." True joy is deep. It is the waking up of the heart's deep springs. Mirth and levity are not joy. They are too shallow and empty to deserve the name. All is hollow. In coming to him who is the fountain of all gladness, the saint of God bids farewell to gloom. Tribulation he may have, but not gloom. *That* has left him for ever, since first he knew the Saviour and opened his ears to the joyful sound. Peace is now his heritage. It is not so much as if joy were abiding in him as if he were abiding in joy. It is not so much as if joy were poured into him as if his heart were ever pouring itself out into a vessel of joy; so deep, so calm, and so abiding is the gladness of the redeemed of the Lord.

But still it is not *levity* that is their portion; it is *joy*. And this joy is not only far superior to this vain mirth, but it is utterly inconsistent with it. This levity is as much an enemy to real joy as it is to holiness and spirituality. Hence it must be rooted out of them. God cannot suffer it in his children. His desire is that they should be holy. This element of earthliness must be purged out. They must be made solemn and thoughtful. For this end he sends affliction. In a moment, perhaps, he smites him to the earth; or by some more slow but withering crushing calamity, he purges out the foolishness that had wrought itself into their inmost being. His purpose is to make them *thoughtful*, serious and solemn. And what he sends to them is fitted to make them *think*, and that in a way in

which they have never done before. The blow he inflicts lays them down in the dust. It in a moment puts to flight all levity. It withdraws them from an airy shadowy world, and sends them into the very inmost recesses of their spiritual being, or forward to the infinite eternity whose vastness and reality they had been little heeding. It brings them into contact with solid certainties, and that makes them thoughtful. It brings them acquainted with sorrow, and sorrow drives off all levity. Sorrow and levity keep no companionship. Affliction awakens them to a sense of their selfishness. They look around them and see, as for the first time, the world they live in, with all its sins and sufferings. They had seen these before, but now they seem quite new and clothed with a reality which had hitherto been unfelt. It is through sorrow that we see truth best. It is when seen through this sad medium that all objects assume their right proportions. Shadows then evaporate; realities compass it about. And *realities* make us solemn. It is shadows that make us light and vain.

Thus God solemnizes his saints, and brings them, in this respect, into closer sympathy with the mind of Christ. All was solemnity with him. And the nearer we are brought to resemble him, the more will this calm, this blessed, this *happy* solemnity possess us. We shall live solemn lives and do solemn deeds. Our looks and tones will be all solemn. We shall be earnest men; men who have no relish for levity, because it is so incompatible with the deep peace which is their portion, and who have no time for it, because eternity is so near.

VI. *Tribulation quickens prayer.* It sends us to our knees. In the day of prosperity a man has many refuges; in the day of trial but one, and that is God. To this refuge he betakes himself. Prayer, perhaps, was something to him before, now it is all. Man's arm has failed, and there is none to lean upon but God. Prayer becomes now a far more real thing than ever. Its value and its importance are seen in a new light. It is prized now as it never was prized before.

We cannot do without it. Of necessity we must now pray, and send up our cries from the depths. It is real asking, a real pleading now. As a mere form it has passed away. What new life, new energy, new earnestness are poured into each petition! It is the heart now that

is speaking, and the lips cannot find words wherewith to give utterance to its desires. The groanings that cannot be uttered are all that burst forth and ascend up into the ear of God.

There is new nearness to God now. It is close dealing with him now. New arguments suggest themselves wherewith to plead; new desires spring up; new wants disclose themselves. God's fulness and our own emptiness are brought before us so vividly that our soul's longings are kindled, and our heart crieth out for God, for the living God, as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so we are made to pant after God. It was David's sorrows that quickened prayer in him. It was in the belly of the whale that Jonah was taught to cry aloud. And it was among the thorns and in the fetters of Babylon that Manasseh learned to pray.

Such are a few of the blessings that flow from chastisement. Only a few have been mentioned, yet there are many. And this the saint knows. Each sorrow brings with it its own train of blessings; and thus, though not joyous but grievous, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

But in all this we must see a father's love. We shall lose much of the benefit of trial, perhaps all of it, if this is overlooked. It is out of the deep love of Him who gave for us his only begotten Son that sorrow flows down to us. Let us ever rest on this. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? And surely the blessings of chastisement are among these "all things." All things work together for our good. Love can do us no wrong. That is a blessed impossibility. In all that it sends of suffering it is only opening new channels in which to pour itself into us, as well as deepening and enlarging the vessel that it may contain the more. Every sorrow not only is the proof of love, but draws after it larger streams of love. It is love making way for itself because the place is too narrow. The inflicting of the wound is love; much more the healing of it. Surely all is love. There is no unkindness, no harshness, no inattention to our feelings, no needless causing of grief.

Beloved, "it is well." We could not do without affliction. We should neither know ourselves nor God. The depths of his varied love would be as a sealed spring. He wants to teach us all his love. He is seeking for occasions to show it; and if he cannot find them, he must *make* them, rather than that we should not taste the riches of his immeasurable



love. And shall we call him unkind for this? Shall we have hard and rebellious thoughts of him for this? Shall we count it a wrong done to us to have new streams of love flowing in upon us which sorrow has opened? Shall we shrink from that which opens up to us more of the Father's heart?

Who can tell or measure the deep love which chastisement implies? We may, perhaps, be able to measure the love which sends us days of gladness,—but the love which draws the cloud of sorrow over our skies is too deep to be measured or weighed. God's interest in our welfare is to be seen in everything that he bestows; but most of all in his chastisements. How deep must his interest be, how affectionate, how tender, when, in order to secure our welfare, to make us holier, and to add to the weight of our crown hereafter, he can consent to send suffering upon those whom he loves so well. This is love,—paternal love, in its truest kindest form.

Beloved, "it is well." Let us learn, then, to "glory in tribulation." The world, perhaps, submits to it, but it is ours to glory in it. The world tries to bear up under it; but it is ours to give thanks for it. The world may try to get over it as an evil that cannot be helped; let us know how *good* it is to be afflicted. He who is infinitely wise and loving calls it *good*, and shall not we?

Beloved, "it is well." We are not worthy of affliction. We are not worthy that God should take such pains with us to prepare us for his kingdom. Yet he does so. And he will continue to do so to his chosen ones; for it is through much tribulation that they must pass to the Kingdom. And in this let us "greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of our faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

KELSO, *January*, 1846.

[SERIES TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## GRACE AND GLORY.

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*"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."*—TITUS II. 11.

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THE Apostle first speaks of grace in connection with present holiness, and then he speaks of it in connection with future glory. He first speaks of it in reference to the first coming of the Lord, and then in reference to the second.

The *condition* into which grace brings us is that of a pardoned, reconciled sinner; the *character* into which grace fashions us is that of holiness; the *attitude* in which grace places us is that of expectation for Christ's second coming. The last of these three results is just as natural and necessary a fruit of grace as either of the former two. The same grace that teaches us to look back to the first coming of the Saviour, teaches us also to look forward to his second; as the Apostle elsewhere declares, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God, and TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN," 1 Thess. i. 9, 10; and in the passage which we have placed at the commencement of this tract, he states most strongly the connection between "salvation by grace" and "looking for the blessed hope." The moment a sinner has found this pardoning grace that flows out to him from the cross of Christ, he longs to fling himself into the arms of that Saviour who has opened for him this precious stream.

The great truth which the Apostle announces to us in the above passage is, that *grace received necessarily leads us to expect and desire Christ's second coming*. Such is the effect of grace,—the certain result of a believed gospel,—a gospel which brings to us the certainty of forgiveness and the conscious possession of eternal life. The Apostle does not say that this grace *may* lead us to long for the coming of Christ, but *must* lead us, as its designed and inevitable consequence. We do not merely say it leads us to *believe* in Christ's coming, but to expect it, to desire it, to look for it, to love it.

Nor do we say that grace leads us to long for death. Scripture does not teach us that ; it is that “blessed hope,” even the “glorious appearing” of the Lord, that it sets before our eye. Nor do we say that grace leads us to desire the *spiritual* presence of Christ. No ; his spiritual presence is not a matter of hope or expectation, but of present and certain possession, as he himself has said — “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” This spiritual presence is the believer’s present inheritance and joy, but his visible and glorious presence is as yet but the object of hope. That hope, no doubt, is a certain one, which “maketh not ashamed,” but still it refers to things unseen as yet.

Our inference, then, from the passage at the head of this tract is, as we have already stated, that grace truly received necessarily leads us to look for and desire Christ’s second and “glorious appearing” as a “blessed hope.” And that this is really the Apostle’s meaning is manifest from many similar passages of Scripture. There is 1 Th. i. 10, already quoted ; there is, also, 1 Cor. i. 7, “So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ;” Phil. iii. 20, “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ ;” Heb. ix. 28, “To them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation,” &c. &c. Such passages sufficiently confirm our inference. But now we ask, perhaps, “Why is it so ?” Why does grace thus lead us forward necessarily to the second coming of the Lord ? To this we answer :—

I. Because this grace unites us to Christ, and this union, once begun, *necessarily* leads us to press forward to its full consummation. This consummation can only be when we see him as he is—eye to eye, and face to face. When the soul is set in motion toward Christ, it cannot rest till it has fully beheld him—till, like aged Simeon, it has grasped within its arms the object of its fond desire. Faith can do much, but still it is not sight. Nay, the stronger that faith becomes, the more intensely does it quicken within us the desire for sight. To feel that we are His, and that He is ours, and yet not to feel the weariness and bitterness of *absence*, would be strange indeed. To say “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine,” and yet not to desire to behold him, nor to long for his personal vision and embrace, would be an inconsistency which, in human friendships, would be

reckoned a confession of insincerity and estrangement. Love draws us to the beloved object ; with nothing short of that will it be content. If it can be content with less, it is not love at all.

But it may be said, have we not Christ's spiritual presence, and is not that all we need ? We answer,—Christ's spiritual presence is much indeed, but still it is not all that God has promised to his Church, and therefore we cannot be content with it alone. It was never designed to *supercede* his *visible* presence, nor to interfere with the blessed hope of his *visible* return. Nay, the more his spiritual presence is realized, the greater will be the longings for his actual appearance. It is the experience of his spiritual presence that *whets the appetite* for his personal return. For thus the soul reasons,—“ this spiritual fellowship with Christ is declared to be but *the earnest* of the future reality ; and if the mere earnest be so glorious, what must be the personal communion and full-eyed vision ? ” The closer, then, the present union, the more ardent will be the desire for the perfection of that union at the coming of the Lord.

II. Because even this *grace* itself is only begun, and is not to be fully opened up till the day of the Lord. This I gather from such passages as these, 1 Peter i. 13., “ Gird up the loins of your mind ; be sober, and hope to the end, for the *grace* that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” and Ephes. ii. 7., “ That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” This is emphatically the dispensation of grace, and yet it is only the commencement of that grace, now manifesting itself. Here we have grace in large and overflowing measure,—yet the full reserve of grace is yet to come. It awaits us at the Coming of the Lord, for not only is there in store for us against that great day, the exceeding eternal weight of *glory*,—but the full manifestation of *grace* itself is reserved till then. Is this grace then that bringeth salvation, so precious, so desirable now ? How very precious, how very desirable then ought to be its full developement and brightness unobscured ? How much to be desired and longed for, the day of its grand revelation ! It is grace itself then that teaches us to look for the blessed hope of the Saviour's glorious appearing.

But some will say, “ What does this future manifestation



of grace concern us, if we can only secure that which is present;—if I get grace to save me, what need I care for aught beyond this?" Now mark the meaning of such a sentiment. (1.) It is saying, that provided you are saved you take no interest in the glory of your God. You care for his grace only because it *saves you*, not because it *glorifies him*. You care only to know as much of God and his purposes as will *save* you. That accomplished, everything else is to you a matter of minor interest. Such a sentiment from one who is "not his own, but bought with a price!" (2.) It is saying that, provided your *salvation* is secured, your *sanctification* is a less material thing. If the other is only secured, *that* can stand over! You know not how much,—how very much your sanctification depends on the assured hope of these future realities. You are as much bound to believe all that will *sanctify* as all that will *save*! Besides, is a man really in a state of salvation who is not eagerly seizing hold of everything that will advance his holiness? The probabilities are that he is *not*. (3.) It is saying that you are never to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on unto perfection, that you are to be always laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, &c., which the Apostle so strongly condemns, Heb. vi. 1, &c.

III. Because the knowledge of Christ which this grace gives us makes us long to see him face to face. "Whom having *not seen* ye love, and in whom, though now *ye see him not*, yet believing, &c., says the Apostle Peter. This love to a Saviour *unseen* makes us long for the nearer, closer fellowship of a Saviour *seen*. His being *unseen* does not prevent us loving him, but our loving him unseen does not lessen our desire to see him "as he is." It is the believing perception of an absent invisible Saviour that quickens our desire to see him "face to face." He is said to be "fairer than the children of men," "altogether lovely." This is the report we have heard regarding him, and this report of his surpassing comeliness only makes us long the more to see him. "They shall *see his face*," is the crowning blessedness of the new Jerusalem (Rev. xxii. 4.) Do you really believe the report, and do you not desire to see the king in his beauty? As good old Samuel Rutherford said, "I often challenge time which holdeth us asunder; I half call his absence cruel, and the veil upon his face a cruel cover-

ing that hideth a fair fair face from a sick soul....I dare not challenge himself, but his absence is like a mountain of iron upon my heavy heart." Does this saint's experience accord with yours? Do his expressions of desire to meet his returning Lord call forth the sympathies of your longing hearts?

Some may say, "What does it matter to me *when* I see Christ, if I know that I am his, and receive assurances of his love." Ah! but would you say so of an absent friend or brother. Would that friend believe you really loved him if he heard you speaking in this manner? Is not this way of speaking an ill-concealed disguise, an awkward apology for the coldness of a heart whose love beats with low and languid pulse? What would you think of a wife saying of her absent husband, "What does it matter *when* I see my husband, if I know that I am his, and receive daily letters from him signed with his own hand?" Would you think her love to be "strong as death?" Would you not think she took the matter with a cool complacency which argued either wonderful composure or wonderful indifference? In the case of a faithful loving wife, would not every communication of her husband's love only make her long more anxiously to meet him, to weary more impatiently for his return? Or take the case of the disciples when Christ was parting from them. According to some, this parting would be a matter of perfect indifference. They had already his spiritual presence and the promise of its continuance, and what cause had they to mourn his personal absence? Yet they were loath to part with their beloved Master. Not to hear the sound of his familiar voice; not to be cheered by the smile of his gracious countenance, was matter of no common sorrow:—and "their hearts were troubled." This parting was a trying event; his absence was a sore privation, and accordingly his concluding hours were spent in administering to their comfort. Was that comfort useless? According to some it must have been so, if his absence was no trial. But if it was necessary to them, is it not as necessary to us? And yet many of us seem to require no such comfort at all; for his absence never seems to cost us one sorrowful thought, nor his return one longing desire. Our feelings ought surely to be the same with his weeping disciples. We cannot be wrong in mourning his absence, and wearying for his return, when not only we read that his disciples thus mourned and longed, but, when we re-

member that the inspired prayer of that disciple who knew him best, and loved him most, who had leaned on his bosom and had *most of his spiritual presence*, was still the prayer of one who wanted something more, who could not be satisfied with anything but his return. Even so Lord Jesus come quickly!

IV. Our fourth reason for saying that this grace necessarily leads us to desire the coming of the Lord is, because it opens up to us all the corruptions of our inner man, and makes us groan by reason of this body of sin and death. Many of our corruptions and temptations are from the external world, and a *spiritual* coming will not *remove* these, however much it *fortify* us against them:—And it is their *existence* that makes us groan, not merely their prevalence. Others of our corruptions are from Satan, the prince of this world, and a spiritual coming *to us* will not bind *him*. Others are from a body of mortality, and a spiritual coming will not redeem the *body*, for, says the apostle, (Rom. viii. 23,) “we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, viz. the redemption of the body.” This “vile body” will still continue vile, till it be changed at the coming of the Lord, and fashioned like unto his own glorious body (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Then, and not till then, will it cease to tempt us. Then, and not till then, will it cease to be to us the source of manifold corruptions, the prison-house of earthly bondage. Till then we “groan, being burdened, not for that we would be *unclothed* (*i. e.* not that we long for the disembodied state, the separation of soul from body,) but clothed upon, (with the house not made with hands, the glorious body,) that mortality may be swallowed up of life,” (2 Cor. v. 4.) And this groaning creation will continue still to groan,—still to tempt, still to weary us,—till He who hath subjected the same in hope, shall come to lift off the curse, and deliver it from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. viii. 21.) And Satan, too, will continue to be the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air, until cast out and bound by Him who is to put all his enemies under both his feet and ours. If, then, we do not long for the coming of the Lord, which alone can deliver us from these enemies without and within, we surely do not feel the power of corruption, the burden of this “vile body,”—we surely are not alive to the seducing influence

of a sin-accursed earth,—we surely have no realizing experience of the tyranny and craft of the Evil One!

V. Grace leads us to look for “this blessed hope,”—because by grace we are brought into a state of suffering and tribulation, from which Christ’s coming is to redeem us. Grace brings along with it many trials to which we were strangers before. It brings the hatred of the world. It brings the alienation of friends. It brings ridicule, contempt, and persecution. “I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword.” To receive this grace is to take up the cross; and he who has not taken up his cross has not received grace. It is to enter upon the path of tribulation,—for “through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of heaven.” Such trials are manifold,—they are innumerable, and they are hard to bear. It is a thorny path, even though a Saviour’s foot-prints are discerned at every step before us, and a Saviour’s arm is held out for us to lean upon!

How earnestly, then, should we desire that day which is to end our tribulation, and introduce us to endless rest! How truly should that event be to us “a blessed hope,” which is the signal of commencing triumph to the poor afflicted saints,—which is to unbind the crown of thorns from the bleeding forehead of the widowed church, and place upon her brow the glorious “diadem.”

Say not—“*Death* will end this tribulation to me personally, therefore I need not look beyond *that*,” for how, let me ask, do you know that Christ may not be come before that? How do you know that your death is to be *before* his coming? Besides, such a feeling as this is selfish in the extreme. You are a member of the body of Christ, and you ought to feel for the *whole body*, and to regard the tribulation as *yours* whether you be in the midst of it or not. You ought to long for the day of final deliverance for the Church’s sake as much as for your own. You sympathize with the past sorrows of the Church—with the sufferings of the suffering band of martyrs: you feel as if you were one of them—as if their sufferings were yours. You wish that “those days” had been shortened, and would gladly have shortened them if you could. Ought not, then, the very same feelings to actuate you with reference to that portion of Christ’s Church which has yet to encounter days of tribulation? Ought you not to desire that, “for the elect’s



sake, these days may be *shortened*? Ought not the consciousness of trouble and suffering in your own case to lead you to desire the coming of the Lord, that the days of the Church's tribulation may be ended for ever?

If you do not desire the coming, there is reason to suspect that you are not bearing the cross. The cross not being felt, the crown loses half its value, and the *coming* is little realised, little longed for. It is the burden of the cross that makes the day of deliverance so desirable in our eyes—that makes us enter into the meaning of such promises as these: “If we suffer we shall also reign with him”—“If we suffer with him we shall be also glorified together,” 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Peter, iv. 13.

VI. Grace leads us to desire the glorious appearing of our Lord, because it opens our eyes to see this world's universal wretchedness, and makes our hearts tender to mourn for it. Men speak of this world as a happy world. They praise it as if it were all but Paradise. And once we, too, might be disposed to join in their praises, and echo back their joyous sentiments. Once it seemed to us a peaceful, pleasant scene, a world of smiles and sunshine, with here and there only the passing shadow of a cloud to intercept the tranquil radiance, or tinge with momentary sadness the hour of mirth. Even disappointment could not dissipate the gay delusion, nor disenchant the bewildering spell. Cares and vexations thickened around us; coldness, desolation, and disease frowned upon us; broken friendships, severed relationships, blighted prospects, darkened our path, and overshadowed our skies;—but even all this could scarcely make us believe what a wild waste wilderness we lived in, what a world of wretchedness and crime.

But grace opened our eyes. We saw first that we ourselves were sinners, and then looking round us we saw with what a world of sinners we were surrounded. We felt that we were in wretchedness, and we began to see what a wilderness of misery encompassed us on every side. The dazzling veil was lifted up, and beneath it we saw scenes that made our hearts bleed at every vein, and heard sounds of lamentation, mourning, and woe ascending from myriads of dying sinners who were living without peace, and perishing without hope, and passing into eternity without a pardon and without a Saviour. It was as if there stood before us some goodly fabric, built with costly magnificence, and

decorated with most inviting architecture. We went round and round it, admiring it on every side. It seemed so fair and goodly,—so peaceful a sunshine rested on it, we thought we should like to dwell within sight of it for ever. And though now and then a shriek was heard within, or a funeral passed out, yet we heeded not these interruptions. But at last we were taken in, and the whole dismal interior lay before us and around us,—a vast hospital of the dying and the dead,—a mighty “lazar-house of many woes.” Then when we saw how the whole creation groaned and travailed, then we felt how infinitely desirable was the day of its deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, how “blessed” was the “hope” of the coming of the Lord.

Such, then, are the proofs of the statement with which we set out, that grace, rightly received, makes us long for the glorious appearing of our Lord. We think they are sufficient to show that that event ought to be to us a blessed hope, and that the attitude in which we are called upon to stand in reference to it, is that of men who are looking and longing for that which is the uppermost desire of their hearts.

Such, believer, let the coming of thy Lord be to thee. Is he not thy friend? Does his absence not make a dreary blank? And art thou not, then, longing for His appearing, for the day when He and thou shall meet to be parted no more for ever!

But if these things be true, then what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? This hope is not only a blessed one, but a holy one. It not only gladdens, but it sanctifies. He who has this hope in him is called upon to purify himself, even as Christ is pure. It brings us more vividly into contact with the Lord, and this elevates and purifies. It makes us overleap the dreary interval which lies between us and his coming, making us feel as if he were already with us, and this tends to conform us to his image.

This grace believed, and glory hoped for, is no barren over-curious speculation of man. It is the very truth of God. Were it nothing but man’s device, it might be dismissed as unprofitable. But it is not so. The grace brings salvation, and the hope leads us ever onward and upward. It is like some well-known star in the firmament, not merely to be gazed at and admired, but serving the storm-vexed

seaman as a guide over the trackless waste of ocean. And may not the low condition of the Church of Christ in these last days be, in no small measure, traced to her having so sadly lost sight of that blessed hope, which was esteemed so precious, by the primitive church, in apostolic days? May the Lord not charge us with the indifference of the unfaithful servant, who said, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and who began forthwith to live in pleasure, as if his master would never return? May he not address us in these last days, as he did Ephesus, "Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

How awful, sinner, must that day appear to thee! Thou hast no hope in it. It is all darkness and sorrow to thee, the beginning of thy endless woe! For he comes to execute the Father's righteous purpose of wrath upon the ungodly, to take vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not his gospel.

And wilt thou live on unmindful of that coming day of tribulation and anguish? It is a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains! Wilt thou live on in thy sins, as if there were no sin-avenging Judge, no sin-avenging day appointed by him, when thou shalt give in thy account for the deeds done in the body. What will *the end* be of all those pleasures in which thou art now swallowing up every care about the day of wrath? The beginning may be pleasant, but what will their *end* be? The coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and thou art yet in thy sins! Still reckless of the Judge and of his sentence! The end of all things is at hand, and thou art living as if there were to be no end at all, as if thou wert to live for ever! The world's Mighty King will soon be here, and thou art still a rebel, whose doom shall be the crushing stroke of the iron rod! And dost thou feel no terror? Is there no sadness on thy brow as that awful day approaches, and the signs of its nearness are becoming visible around thee? Do you still say, let us eat and drink and be merry? Not one sigh for a participation in the coming glory? Not one shudder at the thought of plunging into endless woe? Not one cry for mercy, not one tear for all your ungodliness and worldly lusts? Darkness is coming, wrath is coming, judgment is coming, the second death is coming, the eternal night is

coming, and wilt thou slumber on, as if thou wert on thy way to heaven, or as if hell were all a fable, and the threatened sorrows of eternity a lie?

Here is the message of God to thee, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."—PROV. I. 22-27.

Yet there is GRACE for thee! The free love of God is still in the Saviour's hands, and he is dispensing it freely to all who come! Why, then, reject that free love which would save even thee? Why madly thrust away the love, and choose the wrath? Why prefer the curse to the blessing of the God that made thee? Yet, behold, this free love is still held out to thee! The cup of free grace is once more pressed to thy lips! Oh, drink and live for ever. "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."—Jer. xiii. 16.

REV. XXII. 20.—"*Even so come Lord Jesus.*"

THE Church has waited long  
Her absent Lord to see;  
And still in loneliness she waits,  
A friendless stranger she.  
Age after age has gone,  
Sun after sun has set,  
And still in weeds of widowhood,  
She weeps a mourner yet.  
Come then, Lord Jesus, come!

Saint after saint on earth  
Has lived, and loved, and died,  
And as they left us, one by one,  
We laid them side by side;



We laid them down to sleep,  
 But not in hope forlorn,—  
 We laid them but to ripen there  
 Till the last glorious morn.  
 Come then, Lord Jesus, come !

The serpent's brood increase.  
 The powers of hell grow bold,  
 The conflict thickens, faith is low  
 And love is waxing cold.  
 How long, O Lord our God,  
 Holy and true, and good,  
 Wilt Thou not judge Thy suffering Church,  
 Her sighs, and tears, and blood !  
 Come, then, Lord Jesus, come !

We long to hear Thy voice,  
 To see Thee face to face,  
 To share Thy crown and glory then,  
 As now we share thy grace.  
 Should not the loving Bride  
 The absent Bridegroom mourn,  
 Should she not wear the weeds of grief  
 Until her Lord return ?  
 Come then, Lord Jesus, come !

The whole creation groans,  
 And waits to hear that voice  
 That shall restore her comeliness,  
 And make her wastes rejoice.  
 Come, Lord, and wipe away  
 The curse, the sin, the stain,  
 And make this blighted world of ours  
 Thine own fair world again.  
 Come then, Lord Jesus, come !

KELSO, MAY, 1846.

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